

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 25

The surprise announcement was that President Obama had ordered a withdrawal of our forces in Afghanistan and Marines and Soldiers were being ferried to Aircraft Carriers and any ship with a helipad. The last to leave, Fox speculated, would be the Special Forces types. Now, that made sense, first in, last out.

It had started to go to hell over there when we finally found bin Laden and killed him on 2May11. The CIA had tracked him down to a small town and SEAL Team Six, Red Squadron, had flown in and attacked the compound in Abbottabad. When the SEAL Team attacked the compound, in addition to Osama bin Laden, three other men and a woman were killed. The individuals killed were bin Laden's adult son (likely Khalid, possibly Hamza), bin Laden's courier, al-Kuwaiti's brother Abrar, and Abrar's unarmed wife Bushra. SEAL Team Six used HK416s with suppressors and unidentified handguns, probably .45acp. No special operator would be caught dead with a 9mm Beretta.

Do you remember this guy?

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a SEAL Advisor with the Strategic Technical Directorate Assistance Team, Headquarters, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. During the period 10 to 13 April 1972, Lieutenant Norris completed an unprecedented ground rescue of two downed pilots deep within heavily controlled enemy territory in Quang Tri Province. Lieutenant Norris, on the night of 10 April, led a five-man patrol through 2,000 meters of heavily controlled enemy territory, located one of the downed pilots at daybreak, and returned to the Forward Operating Base (FOB). On 11 April, after a devastating mortar and rocket attack on the small FOB, Lieutenant Norris led a three man team on two unsuccessful rescue attempts for the second pilot. On the afternoon of the 12th, a Forward Air Controller located the pilot and notified Lieutenant Norris. Dressed in fishermen disguises and using a sampan, Lieutenant Norris and one Vietnamese traveled throughout that night and found the injured pilot at dawn. Covering the pilot with bamboo and vegetation, they began the return journey, successfully evading a North Vietnamese patrol. Approaching the FOB, they came under heavy machine gun fire. Lieutenant Norris called in an air strike which provided suppression fire and a smoke screen, allowing the rescue party to reach the FOB. By his outstanding display of decisive leadership, undaunted courage, and selfless dedication in the face of extreme danger, Lieutenant Norris enhanced the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

That's the Medal of Honor citation that he got for rescuing Icel "Gene" Hambleton. You know, BAT 21 Bravo. Didn't you see *Bat*21*?

NGUYEN VAN KIET, PETTY OFFICER THIRD CLASS
NAVY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
CITATION FOR NAVY CROSS

For extraordinary heroism while serving with friendly forces engaged in armed conflict against the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong communist aggressors in the Republic of Vietnam. On 13 April 1972, Petty Officer Kiet participated in an unprecedented recovery operation for a downed United States aviator behind enemy lines in Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam. He courageously volunteered to accompany a United States SEAL Advisor Thomas R. Norris (Medal Of Honor) in an extremely hazardous attempt to reach the aviator, who was physically unable to move toward friendly positions. Using a sampan and traveling throughout the night, they silently made their way deep into enemy territory, past numerous major enemy positions, locating the pilot at dawn. Once, after being spotted by a North Vietnamese patrol, he calmly continued to keep the enemy confused as the small party successfully evaded the patrol. Later, they were suddenly taken under heavy machine gun fire. Thinking first of the pilot, he quickly pulled the sampan to safety behind a bank and camouflaged it while air strikes were called on the enemy position. Due to Petty Officer Kiet's coolness under extremely dangerous conditions and his outstanding courage and professionalism, an American aviator was recovered after an eleven-day ordeal behind enemy lines. His self-discipline, personal courage, and dynamic fighting spirit were an inspiration to all; thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and the Naval Service.

The Navy, Army and Air Force Cross are the highest awards that can be awarded to a foreign national. Last word was that Kiet lived in Washington State. Norris went on to serve with the FBI for 20 years and was part of the Hostage Rescue Team. That's amazing if you also know that Norris had been severely wounded in his last action and lost an eye and part of his skull. There's more, check Wiki, but do it quick.

Be that as it may, we did a second round of drinks and called it a night. I left the weather radio turned on in its recharging stand on the nightstand next to the bed. Israel either would or they wouldn't and there wasn't one damned thing we could do about it.

"I'd like too, but... it's been a long day."

"Yeah, me too. Nite..."

If that damned radio went off during the night, we didn't hear it. We got up, showered and dressed. It seemed like a good day for Belgian waffles, but on second thought, ham and eggs were much quicker. I started coffee, put on water to boil, sliced off 4 ham slices and set out a carton of eggs. I was just setting the bread on the counter next to the toaster when Joanne joined me.

"Water is heating for tea."

"Sit down and drink your coffee, we have another long day."

"What do we have to do beyond picking up the meat from the locker plant?"

“The stuff Wal-Mart ordered for me will be in today. When will the things you ordered be in?”

“I went with 2 day air and I really don’t want to argue about that. It won’t do us any good on a truck halfway between the shipper and us.”

“Good idea.”

“Jack asked if I was insane.”

“You know Jack.”

“I sure do. How much hay and straw was that?”

“Close to a semi load of each, it was all they could spare. Where did you put the extra COB?”

“I had them put it on a tarp in the boat stall in the regular garage.”

“Better cover the boat with a tarp.”

“I’m going to have to buy more; I used all 8 protecting the hay and straw. The other four are covering the firewood.”

“You should get a pair of those 250 quart Igloo coolers on the way to Mountain Home. Wal-Mart had them. Stop there before you go to the locker plant. It’s cold enough out that the stuff from Wal-Mart won’t heat up but you never know how cold the meat will be.”

It proved not to be a problem. Jack and Marion joined us when the smell of coffee made it to the boys’ bedroom. After we ate, Jack and I took off for Wal-Mart and the locker plant. The outside temp was 29°F so we didn’t bother to put those items in any of the four ice chests. The locker plant had the order ready and they had sharp frozen the meat. We loaded up and then put the hams, bacon, sausage and butter from Wal-Mart in the two 105 quart coolers. Our final two stops were to pick up a dozen tarps and a stop at the gun store to check what he had for ammo. I bought 5 200 round cases of full power .45 Colt rounds, 2 500 round cases of cowboy rounds, 400 rounds of .45-70-405 reloads and the ammo that we had in for reloading.

We were home by 11:00. We dated the packages of meat and added everything to the new chest freezer. All the freezers were full to capacity. Our freezer capacity not counting the refrigerator freezer was 71ft³. With the refrigerator freezer, it was ~80ft³.

We set up an assembly line with Joanne and Marion sealing the packages of meat and Jack and I hauling the freshly sealed packages of meat to the shelter chest freezer a box at a time. After we finished with the meat from the locker plant we started on the

items we'd picked up at Wal-Mart. The process was only interrupted with a quick lunch of tuna salad sandwiches and Lay's potato chips. Either Marion or Joanne put a roast in the crock pot with potatoes, onions and baby carrots. They'd started it while we were gone.

There was no real news, just the continuing evacuation of military personnel from Afghanistan. C-5Bs and C-17s landed, loaded troops and equipment and headed to Diego Garcia, according to Fox. Chartered Russian An-124s were hauling the Abrams back to the US. Diego Garcia isn't all that big, occupying ~67mi² or ~43,000 acres. There are major naval facilities located there and between the ships and the aircraft, our troops were coming home.

Not reported was the withdrawal of US personnel from South Korea and a significant cut in US personnel from throughout Europe. The government resorted to use of The Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) to transfer personnel from Diego Garcia to Heathrow and on to the US after refueling. A super tanker load of jet fuel was rerouted from Kuwait to Diego Garcia. It appeared that when Obama really wanted a mission accomplished, he and his advisors knew what it took. What he gained with this bit of legerdemain probably picked up a few votes for November 2012.

Newt publically congratulated Obama, saying, *Not bad, bin Laden and getting our boys and girls home before rather than after it became too late.* Newt picked up a bunch of votes, too. The continuing Republican Debates were thinning the pack and at the moment, Milt was leading the pack and Ron was second. At the moment, I was ambivalent, it remained to be seen how this mess turned out.

Question. Had the War on Terror notched up or down? It was even money as far as I was concerned; like a tennis match, it had only changed courts.

"What's next?"

"I don't know. It's too cold to go shooting so how about we clean all of the firearms and make sure they're good to go? Nine has become ten."

"What do you mean by that David?" Jack asked.

"The Nuclear Club Jack; we are officially up to ten players."

"They wouldn't."

"I agree with that; they wouldn't attack the US directly. Don't forget our main ally in the Middle East, Israel. The Iranians hate Israel. Sometimes I think everyone hates Israel. I wonder what the critics of the plan to base radar in the Czech Republic and ground based missiles in Poland think now. The plan was abandoned when Russia threatened to base nuclear missiles on its border with NATO countries. Agreement was reached on stationing Aegis equipped ships in the Black Sea and missiles in Romania."

“What’s become of that?”

“I’m not totally certain, but our Navy is in the Black Sea equipped with RIM-161 SM-3s. I seem to recall that the Romanian based missiles had a forward looking timeline beginning in 2015.”

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“What does Israel have for missiles?”

“Their offensive missiles include Jericho 1, 2 and 3. Their submarines carry the Popeye Turbo cruise missiles. Their defensive missiles include Patriot 2 and 3 and their various Arrow interceptors.”

“So what do we do now?”

“Sit and wait, I suppose.”

“David, I have four dead standing hardwood trees I need to get dropped, cut, split and stacked.”

“Do you need the wood?”

“The firewood and Marion’s job are what’s keeping our heads above water.”

“If you weren’t here, what would you be doing?”

“I’d be harvesting those four trees. They’re really large and could contain from 12 to 16 cords.”

“Need help?”

“You need firewood?”

“We can always use firewood. It’s one of those things you can never have too much of, like toilet paper, coffee and ammo.”

“And Earl Grey tea,” Joanne added.

“How are you on Earl Grey?”

“I expect the last order to arrive today or tomorrow. I doubled up this time.”

“When did you order it?”

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“The day after school let out for Christmas break. I’m beginning to wonder if the shipment got mislaid.”

“They’ll probably deliver it today or tomorrow.”

“That’s ok; I picked up five boxes, just in case. And you saw the amounts of bath tissue and coffee I stocked up on.”

“David, if you could drive over and pull back my wood splitter I could drop a tree and haul the cut up pieces here. You can split them while I return for the next load of cut up pieces. One fifty a cord and you count it.”

“Ok, want to go now?”

“It’s good a time as any.”

“We’ll be back.”

“Bye... Arnold.”

“Smart ass.”

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Jack and I lifted the topper off my pickup and headed for their place. He had several cords of firewood and I loaded my pickup before hooking up the splitter. I returned home and began a new pile of firewood after I dropped the splitter. I hooked up our trailer and returned to Jack and Marion’s and loaded both the trailer and my pickup. I managed 3 pickup loads and two trailer loads of firewood. Jack was there when I got home, unloading his first load of cut up pieces of the tree. From the size of those branches, the tree had to be huge.

“I’ve been moving your split and stacked firewood Jack. I’m stacking it separate and we’ll count it when we’re all done.”

“Fair enough; that will let me concentrate on harvesting the wood. I think you’ll be surprised about the yield of those four trees. There is a smaller pine that would give you plenty of softwood for starting fires.”

“We’ll take it.”

“Ok, I’ll cut that after I finish the four oaks.”

“The tea arrived.”

“Oh good, that should last for a while.”

“I got to thinking and called them. They’re going to overnight 12 more cases.”

“I don’t know how you drink as much of that stuff as you do.”

“That’s easy, one cup at a time.”

“Ha, ha, funny.”

“Why don’t you two get cleaned up and we’ll plate the dinner?”

“Jack?”

“I need a quick shower, I have sawdust everywhere. Can you hold it that long?”

“No problem; I’ll have another cup of tea. Marion seems to like your Darjeeling David.”

“I’ll get more when I go past Wal-Mart tomorrow. I should have Jack’s entire supply of split and stacked firewood moved by late tomorrow.”

After Jack returned, Joanne cut up the roast and put the potatoes in one bowl and the carrots and onions in a second while Marion made a quick batch of gravy using brown gravy mix, water and the juices from the crock pot. The juices were unnecessary but make the gravy taste just a little better. There were no leftovers. After dinner, we adjourned to the living room to get caught up on the day’s events, Jack and me with coffee and Joanne and Marion with tea. I’d definitely need all the Darjeeling Wal-Mart had.

There wasn’t really a lot of news. The evacuation of American forces from Afghanistan was continuing and CRAF planes continued to bring home plane load after plane load of American Forces, in full battle rattle. The planes were landing at several destinations close to major cities.

“What’s that all about, do you think? I’ve never seen anything like that David.”

“I just don’t know; the White House must have a reason. The news reader said the troops are setting up camps on or near the airports.”

“I heard that. Correct me if I’m wrong, the President cannot use the military as a police force except in case of Insurrection.”

“That’s Posse Comitatus all right and the John Warner Defense Appropriations Act was repealed. However, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012 has been passed by the Senate. Debate over, and a vote rejecting an amendment to the Act drafted by Senator Mark Udall has left open the possibility of indefinite deten-

tion of terrorism suspects as defined in Title X, Subtitle D, § 1031(b) of the bill. Opponents of the bill have made accusations that it allows for the indefinite detention of US citizens, and as such has received attention by the ACLU and media sources.

“As currently written, the NDAA text affirms the authority to *detain a person who was part of or substantially supported al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated forces under the law of war without trial until the end of hostilities*, and authorizes *transfer to the custody or control of the person’s country of origin, any other foreign country, or any other foreign entity*.

“The Udall Amendment forbidding the indefinite detention of US citizens was rejected by a vote of 38-60. A later amendment to preserve current law concerning US citizens, lawful resident aliens, and others captured within the United States, sponsored by Senator Dianne Feinstein, was accepted 99 to 1; Senators Carl Levin, Lindsey Graham and others have argued that current law authorizes indefinite detention of American citizens detained in the United States; Feinstein is among those who have argued that it does not.

“The White House has threatened to veto the Act, arguing that *the authorities granted by the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists, including the detention authority, are essential to our ability to protect the American people... Because the authorities codified in this section already exist, the Administration does not believe codification is necessary and poses some risk.*”

“What do you think of that?”

“As much as I personally dislike Feinstein, I agree with her on this sole issue. I even agree with Obama that the Act poses some risk.”

“Guys, I don’t know if you’ve read any of Fleataxi’s stories, but he used to say, *nuke ‘em all and let God sort ‘em out.*”

“Who is Fleataxi?”

“He’s a Patriot Fiction author.”

“He WAS a Patriot Fiction author, David. He passed away on April 11, 2011.”

“Sorry, I didn’t know. How old was he?”

“He was fifty, about seven years younger than we are.”

“Not to change the subject, but it was a long day and I’m plumb tuckered out. I think I’ll head for bed.”

“I’ll come with you David.”

“We might as well call it a night too. I still have a lot of that white oak tree to haul and three more to drop, cut up and haul; and a pine tree, come to think about it.”

“I’ll lock up,” I said.

I noticed when I entered the bedroom that Joanne had placed my P-14 and a Maglite on the nightstand. I laid my Warthawg next to the P-14, undressed and slid into bed. Jack had finally found a .45 he liked that he could afford. It was a Taurus PT1911 that he’d picked up in ’07 or ’08. I think he said he got it in Springfield. If he’d just have asked, I could have got it cheaper in Mountain Home, but he didn’t and I didn’t have the heart to tell to him.

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By New Year’s Eve, Jack had dropped the second and third white oaks, cut them up and transported them. The Mark Twain Forest doesn’t allow the harvesting of hardwood on its wood cutting permit. On top of that they limit the harvest to personal consumption. Jack said something to the effect of what the hell, they can’t lock me up longer for the stuff we got from the military and he did have a point. I wonder if Congress has passed a law against interstate transport of illegally harvested hardwood.

I started out behind him due to hauling the split and stacked from his place. He had a good splitter and by New Year’s Eve, I was only behind by the load he’d hauled and dumped at 14:00 when he stopped for the day. Sorry, sometimes I fall back on military time, local, not Zulu.

All of the food and ammo I’d ordered came in and I cleaned Wal-Mart out of Darjeeling, twice. Joanne’s Bigelow tea order also arrived. Marion and Joanne planned a pleasant meal of thick top sirloins, baked potatoes and Caesar Salad. We’d have dinner around 7:00, with cocktails and snacks earlier around 5:00. Joanne had a bottle of California champagne chilling in the refrigerator to bring in the New Year at midnight local.

As everyone in the US should know, the lowering of the ball at Times Square is shown repeatedly in each time zone to coincide with local time. As we waited for midnight, the TV was on and muted. We four were visiting discussing the events since we’d moved to the area, our foster boys and most especially, this past year.

For the most part we were counting our blessings. Joanne and I had gotten married and celebrated our tenth anniversary on 9/11/11. Sean and Colin had come to live with us during Christmas vacation, 2005. Both had achieved 4.0 gpas and had been Co-valedictorians of their graduating class. They were attending the USCGA in New London and in their second year.

Jack and Marion, after a shaky start, had put it together and he had his firewood business and she had a job, as housekeeper for a well to do family. It was really no more than being a cleaning lady, but between his Army pension and their incomes, they were

finally comfortable. Her job was Monday, Wednesday and Friday, leaving her time to keep their home up and to enjoy her quilting hobby. She'd even sold a quilt, for \$1,250.

At 10:05 local, the EAS message appeared on the screen and I hushed everyone and turned up the volume.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

Thank you, I will try to be brief. Earlier today the nation of Israel, in conjunction with forces of the United States, attacked Iranian nuclear sites. While the Israelis delivered conventional bombs against over a dozen targets, F/A-18 Super Hornets from CVN-72 Abraham Lincoln and CVN-75 Harry S. Truman provided air cover.

Our aircraft dropped no bombs, fired no rockets nor expended any munitions. In consultation with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, it was determined that a conventional strike against Iran's nuclear facilities was an acceptable course of action.

The United States agreed to provide air cover. Initial assessments disclose all targets were destroyed and all Israeli aircraft returned to their bases in Israel, just as all American aircraft returned safely to their carriers.

The Lincoln and Truman are retiring from the Persian Gulf and moving to offshore Afghanistan to aid in the recovery of our final forces not yet withdrawn from Afghanistan, transported to Diego Garcia and from there, home. I should note that Egypt has closed the Suez Canal and considerations are ongoing regarding returning our two carriers to Norfolk.

Thank you and good night.

Left unsaid was *and consultation of Prime Minister Putin of Russia...* and Russia agreed to mediate any opposition from the People's Republic of China.

"Huh."

"I'll double that."

"Oh no, the boys."

"Are perfectly safe at the USCGA."

"Jason is in Phoenix..."

"If you want, we'll buy him a ticket on the first flight out of Phoenix and fly him here. Jack and I can pick him up at whichever airport he comes to. Springfield-Branson may be the closest or Little Rock."

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“Marion?”

“I’d like that Jack.”

“Help yourself to the phone, Jack. Phoenix is one hour earlier. If he’s coming, have him call you back with the flight number and we can call and pay for the ticket over the phone with the airline.”

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Jason didn’t want to come. He felt he was perfectly safe with his grandparents and they had been shopping and stocked up after the Iranian test was announced. They lived outside of Phoenix proper and grandpa had a culvert shelter installed in his backyard. He talked with Jack and Marion and they came to accept his position. He’d driven down in his CJ and had taken all of his firearms and ammunition. Like it or not, he wasn’t coming home.

After that, our conversation turned to the closure of the Suez Canal. The Navy had two options: sailing around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope or continuing sailing east and around Cape Horn, the tip of South America, using the Drake Passage. We concluded sailing south and west around the tip of Africa made the most sense. Although the area was infamous for rogue waves, it was by far the shortest return voyage. It was common knowledge that the Nimitz class carriers couldn’t pass through the Panama Canal and wouldn’t be able to until the New Panamax Locks were built and in operation. When one of the carriers was transferred from the east coast to the west coast, or vice versa, the voyage was invariably around Cape Horn.

Watching the ball drop in Times Square was anticlimactic. We called it a night and after locking up, went to bed.

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On February 20, 2009, after being asked to be the prime minister of Israel, Netanyahu described Iran as the greatest threat that Israel has ever faced: *Iran is seeking to obtain a nuclear weapon and constitutes the gravest threat to our existence since the war of independence.*

Speaking before the UN General Assembly in New York on September 24, 2009, Netanyahu slammed Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's speech at the forum, saying those who believe Tehran is a threat only to Israel are wrong. *The Iranian regime, he said, is motivated by fanaticism... They want to see us go back to medieval times. The struggle against Iran pits civilization against barbarism. This Iranian regime is fueled by extreme fundamentalism.*

Strongly opposed to Iran's alleged pursuit of uranium enrichment, Netanyahu said *It's 1938, and Iran is Germany, and Iran is racing to arm itself with atomic bombs*. In a March 8, 2007 interview with CNN, he asserted that there is only one difference between Nazi Germany and the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely that the first entered a worldwide conflict and then sought atomic weapons, while the latter is first seeking atomic weapons and, once it has them, will then start a world war. Netanyahu repeated these remarks at a news conference in April 2008.

On January 27, 2010, speaking at Holocaust remembrance ceremony held at Auschwitz, in a possible reference to Iran, Netanyahu said, *We will always remember what the Nazi Amalek did to us, and we won't forget to be prepared for the new Amalek, who is making an appearance on the stage of history and once again threatening to destroy the Jews*.

According to a US State Department representative in November 2011, under the leadership of Netanyahu and Obama, Israel and the United States have enjoyed unprecedented security cooperation. I believe that explains President Obama's earlier announcement.

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I was up early and went directly to the barn to tend to the horses. Once they were fed and the bedding changed, I went back to the house to make coffee and try and decide on what to have for breakfast. When I had my coat hung up and entered the kitchen, the coffee was made, a package of bacon was lying on the counter with the last of the white bread and the large stainless steel pan we used for salads and mixing bread was on the counter covered with a cloth.

"Horses ok?"

"I fed them and swapped out the bedding. They should be good until evening. Bacon and eggs?"

"I thought it would be quick and easy. I used that commercial bread recipe and will bake six loaves. Do you want french bread; that's a different recipe?"

"No, six 24 ounce loaves should be enough."

"I only made 6 pounds of bread; do you want 6 one pound loaves or 4 24 ounce loaves?"

"That's right, you have strapped pans. How about 3 24 ounce loaves and use the last 24 ounces for cinnamon rolls?"

"That sounds good. We're getting low on eggs; I think I will run in to Wal-Mart and get all of the generic egg-beaters they have on hand and freeze all but a couple of containers."

They're nothing but egg whites, a coloring agent and a bunch of chemicals. Since they're for scrambled eggs, freezing them won't hurt anything."

"Ok. Get more Darjeeling if they have any."

"Anything else?"

"Not that I can think of. However, be sure to take your weather radio."

"I'll have my purse, don't forget."

"Someday you're going to be spotted by someone who recognizes a Galco purse."

"I'm carrying the Hi-Power in it these days. I'll leave that locked in my glove compartment and I'll be wearing slacks and flats."

Slacks and flats was one of the outfits Joanne wore when she had the PPK in her ankle holster and a pair of magazines in her ankle magazine pouch. The .380 wasn't much of a round, but we always use Gold Dot for carry. The GDHP only went 90gr in .380, but it would give someone one hell of a headache, or worse.

The fear of a looming war generally is kind to the stock market. In this case the uncertainty about *looming* had a negative impact on the market and it started to fall. Investors seeking safe havens began to buy precious metals and investment grade diamonds. Investment grade diamonds are for the rich for the most part because two ¼ carat diamonds don't equal one ½ carat diamond. Precious metals, providing they're the same fineness are interchangeable, for the most part.

A one ounce Krugerrand is equal in value to a one ounce Eagle. Both are 22 carat and both contain exactly one troy ounce of gold. Some people won't accept that, but it's strictly a personal choice because the coins have equal value. Our belts held 10 one-tenth ounce gold coins, four one-quarter ounce gold coins and two one-half ounce gold coins.

The price of gold and silver rose sharply on this day in response to those seeking a safe haven. Gold went to \$1906.45 and silver rose to \$37.60, much closer to the fifty to one ratio. One of the influencing factors was undoubtedly the fact that more people could afford silver than gold. Under the present circumstances, I expected both to continue to rise in price until the investors lost their uncertainty.

When Joanne arrived home, she was carrying more wealth than when she went to the store and she'd ended up buying all sorts of things at the store. That included all the loaves of frozen bread dough and all the generic egg-beaters they had on hand. Although we were a bit short on freezer space, she solved that problem by putting them in a 250 quart cooler on the porch with the lid propped open. She did some rearranging in

the freezers and eventually came up with enough space to hold both the now frozen eggs and the still frozen bread dough.

While she did that, I put away the canned tuna, chicken, beef, ham and spam she brought home. It looked like she'd done her best to clean Wal-Mart out of all of meat items and the Darjeeling tea; she had 12 boxes (a case holds 6 boxes, 120 tea bags). I left the boxes of Always pads she bought for Marion sit. Marion noticed the bags and quickly scooped them up and took them to the shelter storeroom. But I did notice the brand and the type/size so if necessary, I could get her more, in a pinch. Joanne had what looked to be about a dozen packages. What was that, a one year supply?

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The first week of 2012 raced by and I was keeping up with Jack's cut up log deliveries. He finally got to the pine and that went quickly. He had to change the chain on his chainsaw so I drove over to Mountain Home and bought him two replacement chains plus more bar oil and 2-cycle engine oil. I also bought a 300-gallon farm stand gas tank and had both it and the 100-gallon tank filled and added PRI-G.

"I'm sorry David, but Marion has to get back to her job because her employer will be back the day after tomorrow. I marked more standing dead trees I want to get dropped and hauled home. So, if it's ok, we can settle up on the firewood and we'll return home today."

"I make the count at 15½ cords of hardwood and 1¾ cords of softwood for a total of 17¼ cords at \$150 per cord. Do you agree?"

"Close enough, what's the total?"

"\$2,587.50, cash okay?"

"Yeah, I'll take cash."

I counted out 25 Ben Franklins and added four twenties, a five, and three ones.

"There you go, Jack, don't spend it all in one place. Those three sacks over there contain two new chains in one sack, chain oil in the second sack and 2-cycle engine oil in the third sack. It's a bonus for all the work."

"Gee, thanks."

"You're welcome. If there is anything of yours in the storeroom you wanted to take, help yourselves. I'll unlock the armory. I'd like to suggest that you take only as many firearms and as much ammo as you'll need short-term."

"Are you sure?"

“Well, it’s up to you...”

“I hear a *but* there. Ok, just what we need short term. One rifle, one shotgun and one handgun, apiece. You don’t think it’s over, do you?”

“It doesn’t matter what I think; but, since you asked, I think we’ve only seen the beginning.”

After they left, I confronted Joanne.

“You have a job too, you know.”

“Yes I do and I know it. I also know that in the winter, the distance between here and Mountain Home is further, speaking of the time of the commute. It would take longer to get home in an emergency because of the drivers on the road. So, I contacted the Superintendent of Schools and resigned before the new semester began. I don’t know if it was a good decision or a bad decision, but it was mine to make and I made it. I also called and cashed out my Self-Directed Individual Retirement Arrangements.

“You never explained about your Self-Directed Individual Retirement Arrangements. I know there are several alternatives. Who is your trustee?”

“A company in Little Rock holds my purchases from Kitco.”

“But Kitco is a precious metals dealer.”

“Right.”

“And your Arrangement is invested in precious metals that they hold?”

“Right again. I selected a reputable Trust Company in Little Rock to manage my Self-Directed IRA and after establishing an account with them, contracted Kitco and opened an account with them. I sent my money to Kitco; they converted it to gold and within 4 days transferred it to Little Rock. As of two days ago, I was 59½, so there’s no penalty for early withdrawal and I have until April 15 of next year to pay the tax.”

“Do you realize how little I invested to get what I have? The reason I didn’t have many gold coins was because I deposited them with the Trust Company as contributions to my IRAs. That was cheap gold honey! Some of it is worth six or more times what I paid for it. And the beauty of it is that if I have to pay tax on the gain, I’ll pay the tax with Federal Reserve Notes.”

“That could be a lot of tax.”

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“I know. I have that \$255,000 from Mom and Dad’s estate tucked away, just in case. Plus I have some of my own money tucked away. If we have to sell gold to cover the taxes, we’ll sell our high basis gold and keep the low basis gold. Unlike you, I kept separate records of each gold purchase and can identify each purchase, including Dad’s gold.

“What do you know about numbered Swiss banks accounts?”

“Only that they exist, but isn’t there an agreement between the IRS and the Swiss?”

“Only since 2003. It was theoretically possible to acquire gold, say Krugerrands, and store them in a Swiss deposit box before then.”

“Is that what you did?”

“I know nothing, I see nothing!”

“I don’t believe I’ve said it for a while but you’re always one step ahead of me.”

“You were going to ask me to quit my job?”

“Not at all, that has always been your choice. Of course if you kept working, it meant that I wouldn’t have to find a job. Not that it’s any of my business, but what did you mean when you said you had some of your own money tucked away?”

“I told you that as you implemented savings schemes I did too, right?”

“Yes you did, I recall you telling me that.”

“I’m not going to do *Who’s on First*, again. Anyway, I got so tight I squeaked when I walked. I made more than you and probably always have. So, if you put 10% in gold or precious metals, I put 15% and the same for savings, etc. But it was 15% of what I made, not what you made. And of course before long, my investments/savings were generating more than my job paid.

“I knew that taxes were going to eat me up if I didn’t plan it right. So, I got an investment counselor from whom I could seek advice when I had a question. He put me onto that Self-Directed IRA and so forth. I think we used every legitimate tax shelter that’s out there, assuming I could afford to.

“Just recently, I paid \$15 to download a story written by one the popular Patriot Fiction authors, titled *Expedition*. One of the two principal characters in the novel was one *Jack Sandusky*. One of his first adventures after he ran away from where he lived was panning for gold.

“He did well panning for gold. That was the basis of the empire he built and I mean to tell you the guy had built an empire. He’d done most of what he’d wanted to do in life by the time of the *Expedition*, except one. It’s a good story, you really should read it. If you’re a fast reader maybe you can get through it in a week, but I doubt it.

“That Jack is rather typical of what I did, but he did it on a much grander scale. When they deliver my gold from Little Rock tomorrow, you’ll know how well I did with my Kitco IRAs. That doesn’t count my pension, which is vested and I can begin drawing at age 65. But, the pension is chump change compared to what I accumulated implementing your schemes on a slightly larger scale. If you were to assume that at any given time I made 150% of what you did, you’d have a good starting basis. And when you realize I invested 30% of that 150% rather than 20%, you’ll be closer.

“If you recall, initially, IRAs were very limited but the rules loosened up over time. One of the biggest considerations was the tax deduction you were allowed for your IRA contributions, \$1,500. Anyway, because of the limitations, we set up several LLCs with me as the owner with no employees and we made contributions to SEP IRAs for each of the LLCs. Then they changed the law and allowed people with pension plans to invest in an IRA and I added another IRA. Another change they made was when they changed the provision for high income persons with pension plans, etc.”

“What you’re trying to say is that you didn’t marry me for my money and without knowing it, I married you for your money.”

“I think you’ve got it!”

“How rich are we?”

“It literally changes by the minute. Remember, a lot of my holdings are in gold Eagles. And, since the cheapest Eagle per ounce is a one ounce Eagle, the entire investment is now in one ounce Eagles. We may need a second gun safe. I don’t believe we broke any laws, but we stretched them to the limit.”

“Seven figures, right.”

“Well... I don’t really know. It is not an insignificant amount.”

“The part that I already know about must be close to seven figures between our gold and silver.”

“That means that we could be closer to eight figures.”

“Add three zeros and we’d be right up there with Bill and Warren. I’d have to say in the case of the former he didn’t do badly for a college dropout. Have you ever heard the story about Gary Kildall of Digital Research?”

“Un-un.”

“In 1980 IBM approached Digital Research to license a forthcoming version of CP/M for their new product, the IBM Personal Computer, but on their failure to obtain a signed non-disclosure agreement, the talks failed, and IBM instead used Microsoft to provide an operating system. But there’s more to the story. Kildall was a PhD and had sold over 600,000 copies of CP/M. IBM tried to contact Gary Kildall for a meeting, executives met with Mrs. Kildall who refused to sign a non-disclosure agreement. It seems that Kildall skipped the meeting to go flying or something.

“IBM went back to Gates who signed the non-disclosure agreement although he didn’t have an operating system. The *Microsoft Disk Operating System* or *MS-DOS* was based on Microsoft’s purchase of QDOS, the *Quick and Dirty Operating System* written by Tim Paterson of Seattle Computer Products, for their prototype Intel 8086 based computer.

“However, ironically QDOS was based, or copied from as some historians feel, on Gary Kildall’s CP/M. Tim Paterson had bought a CP/M manual and used it as the basis to write his operating system in six weeks. QDOS was different enough from CP/M to be considered legally a different product. IBM had deep enough pockets in any case to probably have won an infringement case, if they had needed to protect their product. Microsoft bought the rights to QDOS for \$50,000, keeping the IBM & Microsoft deal a secret from Tim Paterson and his company, Seattle Computer Products.

“Bill Gates then talked IBM into letting Microsoft retain the rights to market MS-DOS separate from the IBM PC project, Gates and Microsoft proceeded to make a fortune from the licensing of MS-DOS. In 1981, Tim Paterson quit Seattle Computer Products and found employment at Microsoft.”

“It’s hard to find fault with Bill Gates personally David. He and his wife Melissa have done so much good with his foundation.”

“True enough. Kildall and Steve Jobs are dead. Gates, Paul Allen and the Woz are re-tired.”

“Question.”

“Yes?”

“In all the years, I’ve never asked and you never said how large the lot is that this home sits on.”

“Five acres. It’s mostly wooded.”

“Hardwood or softwood?”

“A mixture.”

“Could we get Jack to clear it, or most of it?”

“I suppose we could but why would we want to?”

“You should really read more Patriot Fiction David. *It* was first brought up in the TTAPS study. *It's* called *Nuclear Winter*. According to the theory, in the event of a Nuclear War, the climate would change and become colder. Depending on your location, you wouldn't be able to grow food. Many of the authors overcome this problem by installing a greenhouse, usually after the war. Since I've quit my job, it would give me a hobby and kill two birds with one stone.

“We could get a greenhouse and I could grow vegetables year round. We could have a propane heater installed and grow lamps so there would be nothing to prevent growing year round. I have the cash and all we need is a clearing to hold the greenhouse.”

“Do you know where to get one?”

“You bet. Call Jack and see if we can hire him to clear a large enough spot. The greenhouse I had in mind is 60'L by 30'W. Have him clear a spot 150'L by 100'W, about one-third of an acre.”

“Want to keep the wood?”

“Heck yes, we can always clean the chimney if creosote builds up.”

“It will probably take him a while.”

“Suggest he hire help. Since we'll be keeping the wood, make it a contract. If he says no, find a timber company to do it for us.”

“How soon...?”

“Like yesterday, ok?”

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Jack declined. I hired a timber company who did it as a *side job* and it took them a week. They just stacked the logs and branches and trimmings. For an additional fee, they bulldozed the stumps out and leveled the plot. I think they used a sub.

Joanne was on her cell phone talking to Texas Greenhouses. They'd need two weeks before they could start. She told them no problem; we had to clear the spot. When they showed up, the greenhouse went up like clockwork and they installed the accessory

propane heater and grow lamps. Joanne had ordered two extra sets of bulbs and we had nowhere to store them.

I had a local come in and build a wood floor storage building on skids while another local laid a slab using concrete blocks. We pulled the storage building on the slab with my pickup and a chain. While I was putting away the extra bulbs, Joanne had the local carpenter, who built the shed, building tables for the greenhouse.

The elapsed time, start to finish, three weeks... money talks. We had all those heirloom seeds from Walton Feed and Emergency Essentials... however, Joanne started growing with hybrid seeds. We'd been composting the horse manure for years, using it on the garden; henceforth it would also be used in the greenhouse.

I bought a very good splitter and a Patriot Model CSV-3090H Gas Wood Chipper/Leaf Shredder with accessories. It's a good one... had a Honda engine. I got started, first, on shredding all of the trimmings. I ended up with a huge pile. Next I cut up the branches, stacking the smaller and splitting the larger. I was going to end up with a lifetime supply of firewood.

The next task was cutting up the logs, a mammoth undertaking. It made me happy I'd bought two Stihl professional grade chainsaws and a lot of lubricating supplies, a couple of spare chains, sprocket grease, a plank attachment, etc. I started in on the softwood, figuring it would be the easiest to learn on. I'd never used a chainsaw before. I bought the protection gear and it made me look like an Imperial Storm Trooper. I had tarps put down to collect the sawdust.

Sawdust, since it is made of trees and plants, makes an excellent component to compost. It is considered a *brown* composting material and must be added to a compost pile containing *green* material, such as food, to break down effectively. Sawdust is especially useful because of its absorption properties, which allow it to take the moisture from the decomposing green material and add that needed moisture to the soil. When added correctly and in correct proportion (1:1), you will have a heavy, dark, nutrient-rich soil to use with your plants and vegetables.

Running the chainsaw eliminated any chance I had of hearing the weather radio, but Joanne had hers. It and her two handguns, the Hi-Power and PPK, became her American Express card and she never went anywhere without them, except to shower or to bed.

Thirty days after the attack on Iran, there had been no visible response. Accusations were flying in several directions and neither Israel nor the US denied their role in the attacks. Israel continued, for the most part, to maintain its policy of nuclear ambiguity. But *everyone* knew they had them.

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 29

About the only thing everyone didn't know was whether they had atomic or hydrogen weapons. There was also a lingering question about whether the attacks, which destroyed the facilities, had destroyed any possible inventory Iran might have. As long as I didn't break my concentration on the task at hand, I was free to think about what I knew about WMDs. India had conducted a total of 6 tests. Included in those tests were low yield thermonuclear weapons. Some of the scientists involved in the Manhattan project had been from India and returned home after the war. India possessed the fission-fusion-fission device and three means of delivery, the same triad we had. Most of India's systems had been purchased/leased from the USSR/Russia.

Pakistan's nuclear program was shrouded in great secrecy. However, they too possessed nuclear weapons (gun type A-Bombs) and a missile delivery system. The ongoing dispute over the Kashmir region involving China, India and Pakistan, had for years been a source of distress for much of the world. The fear was that India and Pakistan would engage in a nuclear exchange and somehow draw China into the exchange, starting World War Three.

At the moment, all eyes were on Iran waiting for their response to the Israeli attack supported by the US. While we were a participant in the attack, the only thing we expended was JP-5. In addition, we'd withdrawn from Iraq and in a surprise move had withdrawn from Afghanistan. However, our stated goals for Operation Enduring Freedom – Afghanistan, killing bin Laden and removing the Taliban from power, had been accomplished. That's not to say that the Taliban wouldn't regain power, but it would be a challenge.

One major concern we had was the situation concerning the returning military forces from Afghanistan, they were being emplaced around the US at or near commercial airports. Worse, no explanation had been forthcoming from the Commander-in-Chief.

There really wasn't much that Joanne and I could do beyond what we were doing. We did order more Tattler lids and rings plus half-pint, pint and quart jars from Canning Pantry, 72 cases each of pint and quarts and 24 cases of half pint jars for jellies, jams and preserves. Near the area we had cleared, we discovered wild blackberries and wild strawberries. We'd also discovered several huge black walnut trees on our five acres. The trees appeared to be in excellent condition, but we got an arborist to check out the trees. He said there were no major issues apparent but he'd like to check them after they'd leafed out in spring. I told him to come back when he thought it was the best time.

The black walnut is a large deciduous tree attaining heights of 30-40 meters. Under forest competition, it develops a tall, clear bole; the open-grown form has a short bole and broad crown. The bark is grey-black and deeply furrowed. The pith of the twigs contains air spaces. The leaves are alternate, 30–60 cm long, odd-pinnate with 15–23 leaflets, with the largest leaflets located in the center, 7–10 cm long and 2–3 cm broad. The

male flowers are in drooping catkins 8–10 cm long, the female flowers are terminal, in clusters of two to five, ripening during the autumn into a fruit (nut) with a brownish-green, semi-fleshy husk and a brown, corrugated nut. The whole fruit, including the husk, falls in October; the seed is relatively small and very hard. The tree tends to crop more heavily in alternate years.

For the best nutmeat, the husk should be removed while it was still green. The husk could be used as a dye and old time trappers used to boil their traps in a pot of boiling water containing black walnut husks. It turned the traps black and if paraffin or beeswax was allowed to melt on the boiling water, the traps came out coated in wax, sealing in any associated scents. My grandfather had taught me that while I was in 9th or 10th grade. I think all of his traps were hanging in Bob's machine shed.

Once all the softwood was cut and stacked, I moved the other softwood to the new stack, separating soft from hard. Next I attacked the hardwood, all white oak. I cut the branches, split where necessary and stacked the firewood at the far end of the pile. Next, I began cutting up the logs, one cut at a time. When I had the tree cut up, I began the splitting task and stacked that firewood with the cut up and split branches.

January became February and February became March. I cut and cut and when the blade dulled, I swapped it with the new one and took the dull blade to Mountain Home to be sharpened. When they called and said the blade could be picked up, Joanne went to Mountain Home and stopped at Wal-Mart on the way home, filling holes in our STS and the freezers, mostly chicken and canned meats.

By April first, I was getting there on cutting up the firewood, but had a ways to go. More importantly, Iran had yet to respond to the attack and the President still had the troops based at or near the commercial airports. As National Guardsmen had to be released, they were replaced by regular, active duty military. It was a regular Raymond Chandler or Earl Stanley Gardner mystery novel. There were a lot of empty hours in twenty-eight years...

By 5/1/12, the firewood was cut, split and stacked. We had over 100 cords of hardwood and ~5 cords of softwood. I had tilled the outside garden spot and Joanne and I had it planted. The plants would soon emerge or the seedlings begin growing. Our emphasis this year was Roma tomatoes so we could produce a very large batch of pasta sauce. The pasta sauce was very basic and included those herbs and spices common to all Italian dishes allowing it to be doctored into spaghetti sauce, lasagna sauce and so forth. It would be canned in quarts.

Around May 15th, a slow withdrawal of the troops began a planeload or two at a time, returning them to their main bases, posts and forts. National Guard troops who hadn't been released at this point in time were all released to return to their Armories and turn in their weapons and battle rattle. Fox news carried a piece that came as a surprise; the troops were being issued HK416 carbines when they returned home. They went on to say that H & K had been running three shifts per day, seven days per week for months,

cranking out the HK416s and delivering them to the Army and Marines. They were being manufactured in the US and Germany.

Once the contracts for the Army and Marines were fulfilled, production would begin for the Air Force and Navy. The Coast Guard, as was sometimes the case, would be last in line. However, the Coast Guard made extensive use of the M14 rifle and it wasn't perceived as a hardship. In fact, most of the DMRs were being transferred to Coast Guard and the other services would use the HK417 or other weapons already on hand as their DMRs and sniper rifles.

The Navy used the Mk 15 aka Tac-50 and the Marines generally used their version of the M82A1/A3 aka M107. Since the Marines were a subordinate of the Navy, who could say with any certainty which .50 caliber rifle the Marines used. Apparently the SEALs used the Mk 15.

While I was checking out something concerning the Corps on Wiki, I ran into the statement *seven uniformed services of the US*. There's the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and the Coast Guard and that makes five, right? I followed a link and learned that there are, indeed, seven. The seven uniformed services are, in order of precedence by ceremonial formation:

1. United States Army
2. United States Marine Corps
3. United States Navy
4. United States Air Force
5. United States Coast Guard
6. United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
7. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps

I guess that explains why the Surgeon General of the US wore a uniform, he/she was the head of the Health Service Commissioned Corps and with two exceptions was an Admiral. The exceptions were the first Surgeon General and an acting Surgeon General in 1981. So tell me, if they're all Admirals, why aren't they called the Surgeon Admiral?

I mean, you know, General is a rank held by officers of the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps. NOAA has naval officer ranks but no Warrant Officers or enlisted. That made sense if one considers the history of NOAA and its relationship with US Coast Guard. And I suppose Surgeon General makes a little sense since the Postmaster General was a civilian. The Postmaster General office was older than the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution, with the first three Postmaster Generals having been appointed by the Continental Congress. Ben Franklin had been the first. But, old Ben had to see gay Paree and word has it that he had a very good time in gay Paree.

Between May 15, 2012 and May 31, 2012 all troops were back at the Camps and Forts and all Guardsmen (generic term) had returned home and had been released from active duty. Only a select few knew that the US remained at DEFCON 3 because Home-

land Security now had *The National Terrorism Advisory System*, or *NTAS*, replacing the color-coded *Homeland Security Advisory System*, or *HSAS*. This new system hoped to effectively communicate information about terrorist threats by providing timely, detailed information to the public, government agencies, first responders, airports and other transportation hubs, and the private sector. *NTAS* had been in effect since April 26, 2011.

As useless as the old system had been, we'd been at orange since 2006 when the liquid bomb plot was disclosed, the new system confused me. Were we at green everywhere or was commercial travel at some unidentified higher level? Under the old system, commercial travel was one level higher than the general level. Reviewing the *NTAS* at DHS was unrevealing. They didn't even cover that issue in the FAQs. Not that we were going to travel anywhere, but that really wasn't the point.

Joanne was correct, we needed a second gun safe and after discussing it with the gun shop in Mountain Home, we agreed on a used safe they had in inventory and had them deliver it, to the basement. I paid cash; we wanted to eliminate most of our FRNs. The investments were made using taxed income as opposed to pre-tax income.

Moving that sucker to the armory was a major exercise, even with the appliance cart. We attached it to the wall like the previous gun safe and proceeded to fill it with the overflow going into the first gun safe, clearly labeled as *Joanne's gold*. We did that because she could identify all of her gold by date of purchase and the cost (basis). Gold was going to need to rise to nearly \$2,500 an ounce before we began to approach 10 figures.

They had a farmer's market in the Wal-Mart parking lot on Saturdays and we began rotating our home canned goods. If a person replaced the jar with a good jar, they got a 25¢ discount. We didn't sell anything with the lifetime Tattler lids. And the products were guaranteed. Should a jar contain something that was questionable, we made a one for one exchange or allowed the customer to select a different similar product. You couldn't get a quart of canned beef for a spoiled quart of vegetables. You could get a *refund* or a *like exchange*. We were very careful about that too. Generally the obvious test of a spoiled product was a bulging lid or bubbles.

We dumped anything with bulged lid before we hauled our goods to the Farmer's Market, but occasionally we'd miss a quart or pint where the lid hadn't bulged but the product was *tainted*. Our policy went a long way to creating good customer relations. We hadn't seen Jack and Marion since he'd returned home although we had visited on the phone and HF bands more than once.

When school let out in Phoenix, their prodigal son finally returned home, apparently to stay. He brought back everything he'd taken and a few new acquisitions. His single action revolvers were Cimarron (Uberti) as was his model 1892 and his side hammer Coach Gun. His .45-70 was a Cimarron 1886 rifle.

The firearms he'd taken with him and brought back were a Springfield Armory Loaded with the synthetic stock and an Mk 3 Leupold variable scope. His shotgun was a Remington model 11-87P with Ghost Ring sights. His handguns were Springfield Armory, a High Capacity GI .45 and a Micro Compact backup. He had an IWB holster for the high capacity and an ankle holster for the Micro Compact. And, he had a 9422 in .22 WMR.

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The Iranians may have been hotheads, but they were patient. They had a plan to get even with *The Great Satan* and its ally Israel. Time was on their side and they sat and watched as the US prepared for some kind of strike and eventually dispersed its troops back to where they were normally based, posted and/or stationed. Their plan was already in motion. While Iran had considered and dropped a plan to block the Straits of Hormuz, their final plan was even more devastating.

In addition to the single weapon they'd tested, they had nine more, six in the 5mT range and three in the 1mT range. All were the Teller-Ulam design with uranium tampers. The three smaller weapons were designated for their arch enemy, Israel. And the six larger weapons were designated for *The Great Satan*. They didn't discuss their plans in other than face-to-face meetings and only a scant few even knew of the plan. Ahmadinejad had orchestrated the plan and kept the Ayatollahs totally in the dark because of the Fatwa.

The weapons for the US were aboard a cargo ship carrying primarily Persian rugs and miscellaneous other cargo from other Arab countries who weren't in the loop. After they considered the source of many of the goods, Customs went over the cargo with a fine tooth comb. They found nothing amiss. The weapons were well shielded and as compact as Iran was capable of making them. They were designed to be missile warheads. The weapons were unloaded from the cargo ship and dispersed to various locations around the US. They were placed in rented storage lockers and abandoned for the moment.

The three smaller weapons were transported to Israel and placed in storage facilities in Nazareth, Tel Aviv and Haifa. These are large cities with a combined population approaching 4 million. Plus Nazareth was exalted in the Christian religion. They had considered and discarded Jerusalem because of the Dome on the Rock. Jerusalem was the largest city in Israel, even if it was contested. It was the Capital of Israel and would have made an ideal target. By not attacking Jerusalem, Ahmadinejad felt the government would fall. As a result of the Yom Kippur war in 1973, Golda Meir had been forced to resign.

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 30

The date had already been determined for the detonations and set into long term, cascading mechanical timers. All nine weapons would detonate within seconds of each other. Only Ahmadinejad and the scientist who set the timers knew the date and time of the detonations.

One could speculate about the possible targets, if one knew the weapons were in the country and in position. But no one knew all of the details, except for one Persian. To cover his plot, Ahmadinejad continued to raise holy hell in every international forum available to him. He didn't know of Russia's involvement or he would have no doubt divided the weapons among three countries rather than two. The fewer countries involved, the greater the chance of going undiscovered. James Bond was never around when we needed him.

"Man, you have enough firewood to last you for years. Do you want to sell some?"

"No Jack, I don't think so. There some things a person can never have too much of. It's covered and should stay dry and any of it that was semi-wet when the timber company harvested it for us, will be dry long before we need it."

"Hey, I'm sorry about that. I had a good thing going until I got caught. They revoked my cutting permit and fined me \$500. Fortunately, when they checked I only had a small amount of softwood at home. What's new these days?"

"Not really very much. Joanne was vested in her pension and she didn't return to teaching after Christmas break. She cashed out her IRAs and we're sitting pretty, financially. We rarely leave home and just bring the venders to us, except for Wal-Mart, of course. We're keeping up with the outside garden and the greenhouse garden. It's sure nice to grow our own Romaine lettuce for Caesar salads."

"Been shooting lately?"

"Some. We've been keeping our hand in and buying ammunition before we practice rather than after. You know how we've always done it, right? We'll we're up to 5,000 rounds of A-MAX for each of the Tac-50s and close to 10,000 rounds for each of the other rifles. Shotgun ammo is up to 20 cases of 00 and #4 and 10 cases of Brenneke. I don't suppose you could get anymore Mk 211, could you?"

"I might be able to. But my source will only take gold."

"If you could get 20 or more cans, we could part with some gold."

"Twenty cans? Oh that's right; the two of you have something like 320 some ounces of gold."

“Used to have,” I thought.

“Right, I did tell we had 324 ounces of gold, didn’t I?”

“He would want \$500 per can, in gold. He’ll accept silver for rounding, but he wants precious metals.”

“If he’ll accept it at spot price and can deliver 20 cans of MK 211, he has a deal.”

“Are you planning on giving me the gold and silver? I’ll return the change.”

“Actually I want to be present and it has nothing to do with you Jack, so don’t get in a huff. Gold has been on a roller coaster and silver mostly follows along. I’ll have my laptop and cell phone and we’ll get the spot price from Kitco when the transaction goes down. That way he’ll have nothing to complain either way. Make certain he understands the terms. If he doesn’t want to do it that way, he can forget it.”

“I don’t know if he’ll agree. Maybe gold will go up, who knows.”

“I believe that it’s almost certain that gold will go up over the coming days.”

If I had only known how much gold would go up on 30Jun12, I would have been shocked. I didn’t know about the weapons secreted in six different locations around the US nor the locations. I didn’t know that one was in a storage room in New York City and would be placed in a van that would be parked in the vicinity of Wall Street. Nor did I know that a second was stored in Maryland and would be transported to a location between the White House and the Capitol. The third was stored in the Chicago area and would be placed near the Sears Tower; the fourth and fifth were in Los Angeles in separate storage lockers, both near the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The sixth and final weapon was in Oakland, the third busiest container port on the west coast after Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Ahmadinejad might be a nutcase, but he wasn’t stupid. A very significant portion of inbound freight to the US passed through those three ports, including all of the freight from the western Pacific. Had I known of his plans, I would have asked, why the Sears Tower? Why not another of the container ports on the east coast? Maybe he was thinking about the Freedom Tower aka One World Trade Center which hadn’t been completed yet.

That left Willis Tower aka Sears Tower as the tallest building in the US. He could damage the country seriously and make a political statement at the same time. Sears Tower would be ideal because it was between the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade. In the blast radius were many skyscrapers and with luck, he was sure he’d get the John Hancock Building about 25 blocks to the north.

The soldier wasn't happy, but he took the deal. After I counted the cans and made certain all 20 were sealed, I booted up my laptop and dialed up the house where Joanne placed the receiver in the hookup for the satellite internet connection. I brought up Kitco and showed the screen to the soldier. Gold was down to \$2,184 and silver was up to \$46.97. Twenty times \$500 was \$10,000. I paid him with four one ounce Eagles (\$8,736), one half ounce Eagle (\$1,092) and one tenth ounce Eagle (\$218.40) and told him to keep the change (\$46.40). I noticed just before I turned off the laptop, gold had ticked down again. That was good for him and bad for me.

"I'll help you load that."

"Thanks Jack, that's kind of you."

The date was D-Day, 6Jun12, the sixty-eighth anniversary. In the coming days we were busy canning produce from both the garden and greenhouse. It looked as if we might run low on jars so we made a trip to Mountain Home, together, and bought all the stores had. There was no reason not to use up the metal lids and we took them off the jars and used them. It was around the 15th of June.

"I think we may have over planted. Is there enough room in the freezers for the peppers?"

"We'll make them fit David. If you're really concerned order another beef, two hogs and buy another 25ft³ chest freezer. We can put it in the shelter storeroom. Have them smoke the loins and hams on the second hog and turn the remainder into sausage. Tell them to not get quite so much fat in the sausage."

"Yes dear."

I ordered the freezer and called the locker plant. I explained what we wanted and then called Wal-Mart and spoke to the meat department where I ordered a case of Hormel Cure 81 half hams, 2 cases of Hormel thick sliced bacon, 10 bags of chicken breasts and 2 bags of chicken thighs. I asked him if he could talk to whomever and get 2 cases of butter. He said he'd have it all the next day. I told him we'd pick it up as soon as the new freezer arrived.

Then I called the appliance store back and asked when we could expect delivery of the freezer. The owner told me two days, unless I wanted to pay a delivery fee of \$75. I told him two days was just fine, if it was a morning delivery. Then, I called the Wal-Mart meat department back and told the same guy it would be two days. He said they could hold it that long, but no longer.

By the way, there was nothing wrong with the sausage and I sort of *forgot* to mention that to the locker plant. And if asked, I simply say, *Sorry, I forgot*. Considering the amount of fat that they were willing to return if we wanted to render it into lard, I was certain the locker plant wasn't making the sausage too fat.

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While we're on the subject of lard, we'd always taken some of the fat and rendered the lard. Lard was probably the very best ingredient in a pie crust. Some of the fat was better than others and there were three grades of fat, visceral fat, from around the kidneys and inside the loin which was the source of leaf lard, the middle grade was subcutaneous fat taken from the fatback and the lowest grade was caul fat. We only took the visceral fat.

But there's more to the story of lard, there are two methods to render the lard, the wet process and the dry process. We did a little of each. First we wet rendered the fat by boiling it in water and scooping the melted lard off the top of the water. When we had most of the lard we were going to get, we let it dry a little and then sliced it into strips so we could get more of the moisture out. When we had it as far as we could take it, we dry rendered the strips, to get a little more lard and a bunch of cracklings. This lard was reserved for refried beans and cracklings were a great snack.

By the late 20th century, lard had begun to be considered less healthy than vegetable oils, such as olive and sunflower oil, because of its high saturated fatty acid and cholesterol content. However, despite its reputation, lard has less saturated fat, more unsaturated fat, and less cholesterol than an equal amount of butter by weight. Unlike many margarines and vegetable shortenings, un-hydrogenated lard contains no trans-fat. It has also been regarded as a *poverty food*.

◦

We had stopped at Wal-Mart on the 26th on the way home from picking up the bacon, hams and smoked loins from the locker plant. Joanne wanted to fill in a few holes. A few turned out to be more than a few, but I'm picking on her; she bought all the Earl Grey and Darjeeling they had on hand. They had that jumbo cooked shrimp that they occasionally had and she bought all they'd sell her, ten pounds. She sent me to get a second ten pounds when she spotted them refilling the display.

I also picked several jars of the Heinz (Shrimp) Cocktail Sauce. It doesn't say Shrimp on label; it has a picture of a shrimp. There are other brands, but I preferred Heinz. In a pinch, you could make it with Ketchup and horseradish. I mean what the hell, that's what H. J. Heinz does. And, these days Heinz packs more than pickles and Ketchup. They're 57 varieties are now 200 that are #1 or #2 in the industry. They also have 50% of the Ketchup market in the US. I don't really like Heinz Ketchup, it separates, or so says the former Hunt Foods.

Hunts is another *success* story. They're currently owned by ConAgra. Before that they were Hunt Wesson after merging with Wesson Oils and before that they were a Norton Simon subsidiary and before that... you get the idea.

What ever happened to Charlie the Tuna? He retired. Starkist was owned by Heinz for a few years until some smartass tax auditor tried to charge them with filing fraudulent use tax returns. They weren't charged and they very quickly paid the tax, interest and penalty. There's a story behind that, but there are also confidentially laws. What I heard was that Heinz leased a jet and sent most of their legal department to Terminal Island where they decided their goose was cooked.

They directed the tax supervisor, who was working with the auditor, to call and plead for not being charged with fraud, or so the story goes. Shortly before that call, the auditor had been thoroughly reamed for screwing up the interview by the higher ups in his agency who told him to try and get the company to pay the tax, interest and non-fraud penalty. So, when the tax manager called, the auditor suggested he had a bit of influence with the agency and if he had a check in hand within 24 hours, he'd make the fraud case *go away*. Money talks and bullshit walks.

The check was delivered 22 hours later by messenger and the auditor called the tax manager and said he'd called the home office and no charges would be brought. The tax manager wasn't a fool and he invited the auditor and his wife to breakfast at the American Legion the following Sunday with him and his wife. He had one question; how long before he called had the auditor been instructed to just get the money and forget the fraud charges? The auditor responded *20 minutes*. At that point, the tax manager handed the auditor a document he wrote to his boss telling him they had to file proper Use Tax Returns with the boss' handwritten instructions directing him to file the false returns. It was his *get out of jail free card* (The Eichmann/Nuremberg defense – speaking in his own defense, said that he did not dispute the facts of what happened during the Holocaust. During the whole trial, Eichmann insisted that he was only *following orders*.) You do remember *Patriot Games*, do you not? Sometimes dumb luck is better than no luck. Tattoo that on the inside of your eyelids.

We were still canning the morning of 30Jun12. The pressure cooker was going and we took a break to have some lemonade. I flipped on Fox News to see if there was any interesting news. Man, I hope to tell you there was some interesting news. Six nukes, believed to be hydrogen bombs, had been exploded; one on Wall Street, the second between the White House and Capitol, a third in downtown Chicago near the Sears Tower, a fourth in the Port of Long Beach, a fifth in the Port of Los Angeles and a sixth in the Port of Oakland.

Wal-Mart was headed for bankruptcy. We hooked up the trailer to my pickup, grabbed a large bundle of cash and headed to Wal-Mart. We went nuts on shelf stable foods that we ate, got more tea and about half the coffee on the shelf, of each brand. It didn't take long to fill the trailer. But the news was out and Wal-Mart was shoulder to shoulder people. Joanne and I got more of the jumbo shrimp; this was the final day at the sales price, and more cocktail sauce.

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 31

There were nice looking filets and top sirloins in the meat case and I bought the limit and then sent Joanne to buy the limit. Thinking that smokes might make a good trade item, people need their vices; I loaded up on those too and sent Joanne to do the same. We then did a quick sweep of the aisles, adding a few items before we hit the checkout lanes. It wasn't the most food we'd bought at any given time, nor was it the most expensive, but we spent quite a bit of our pocket cash.

We returned home and put everything away. Then we each grabbed a Coors and returned to the TV. We rarely drink during the day. This occasion called for a drink or perhaps two. Then the phone rang.

"David, Jack. We got nuked."

"We're watching Fox News. It was six cities, none close; mostly east coast and west coast plus Chicago. I really doubt we'll receive measurable fallout."

"Still..."

"Grab your stuff and come on down."

"Jason too?"

"Of course; we do have male and female dorms and he can have his pick. Bring everything and plan on staying as long as the situation requires. The funny thing about the US government is that as poorly organized as they sometimes seem to be, they usually get to the truth of events like these."

When detectives solve crimes, they consider motive, means and opportunity. The wheels were already churning and the one country with the greatest motive was Iran. Since both Israel and the United States had been attacked, did this event relate to bombing Iran? Iran had tested a hydrogen bomb. Did Iran have more that had been missed in the strike by the Israelis that we supported? If so, how had they managed to get the weapons into Israel and the US?

Remember the date of our wedding, 9/11/01. How long had it taken the government to piece out who was involved in those attacks? Not long, we were in Afghanistan in October hunting bin Laden. The primary question was how had the suspect, Iran, accomplished the task?

At the moment we didn't know who had been killed and who had been injured. The White House and the Capitol had been destroyed... Fox showed satellite photos, but what about the members of the three branches of government?

Obama was out of town and safe. Biden wasn't so lucky; the Senate was in session with him attending. Many of the Senators and Representatives were on the campaign trail and missed the big bang. The Supreme Court was deliberating the latest cases before it and the new court would have to start over.

In New York, the financial district was wiped out. One World Trade Center hadn't fallen, yet. A substantial portion of lower Manhattan was a *no-mans' land*. In Chicago, the Willis (Sears) Tower was down along with the Mercantile Exchange and the Board of Trade. The John Hancock Building was seriously damaged, but standing.

On the west coast, all three ports and their surrounds had been effectively destroyed. Much of San Francisco lay in ruins because there was nothing but the bay between Oakland and San Francisco. The major airports there were damaged to one degree or another. LAX was down but expected to reopen. The FAA communications system for southern California is located in Palmdale at or near Plant 42. Ground bursts produce little EMP and there were mountains between LA and Palmdale.

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Fox announced that they had it on good authority that Cheyenne Mountain had been taken off warm stand-by status and was rapidly becoming fully operational. About then, Jack, Marion and Jason arrived. After introductions were made, the three took their possessions to the shelter and I unlocked the armory. When they were done, we returned upstairs. Noting we were drinking a beer, Jack and Marion also took a beer. Jason looked into the bar refrigerator, hesitating.

"If it's ok with David; it's ok with us Jason," Jack observed. I nodded and Jason took a Coors Light. A whole lot of growing up would be happening in the very near future. There wasn't really that much beer to begin with, it doesn't keep.

The pressure canner had been set off the heat when the timer rang; so much for canning today. Joanne and Marion threw together a quick lunch of chicken salad sandwiches and Frito Lay Classic chips. Joanne hadn't put the steaks or shrimp in the freezer, supper was in the refrigerator, ready to go. They must have set the jars out of the canner; I thought I heard some of the lids ping.

After exhausting Fox, we turned to CNN to get their slant on things. They didn't agree with Fox on much beyond six weapons having been detonated. MSNBC was worse, if that's possible. I believe that Headline News had the best coverage, despite it being part of CNN. How did CNN get to be the way it was? Well... Ted Turner married Hanoi Jane... his third and final wife. They're divorced. Neither has remarried. Did you know Ted was once the largest landholder in the US? He owns ~2 million acres.

When we couldn't stomach any more TV, I headed to the barn to tend to the horses with Jack and Jason in trail. I fed them and scraped up the dirty bedding, depositing it out-

side in the straw pile and returning with a new bale of straw. After I spread it, Jason had a question.

“Mr. Burns, could I help with the horses?”

“You can if you’ll call me David. I won’t answer to Dave and Mr. Burns was my late father.”

“Ok, David it is.”

“You saw what I did. It is done in the morning and again in the evening. You can take either shift, or both.”

“I’ll do both if you don’t mind. These horses, are they Lipizzaner?”

“Andalusian, but you know, now that you mention it, they could be. Lipizzaner’s are out of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna, the same as the Andalusians and they are gray. You’ll have to ask Joanne, she’s the horse expert around here. I’m just the guy who feeds them and cleans up after them.”

“Mrs. Burns the question came up about your horses. David said they were Andalusian, but they sure look like Lipizzaner to me.”

“It’s Joanne, Jason, and they actually are Lipizzaner’s. They didn’t quite conform to the breed standards and were gelded. At that, they were some very expensive horses. They’re also slightly larger than the stallions of the breed. These run about 15.3 hands as opposed to the breed standard of 15.1½ hands. You do know that there are only about 3,000 Lipizzaner’s total throughout the world?”

“I knew they were rare, especially in North America.”

“The breeder had two stallions and several mares. Any colts not meeting the strict breed standards are gelded. We got lucky finding that breeder and started with two horses and increased the herd to four. From there, we went to twelve. We started out with one for David and one for me. Then, we added two more for your parents. In late 2005, we began providing foster care for twins, Sean and Colin. I bamboozled David into building a barn and increasing the herd to twelve. It was one each plus remounts for the six of us.”

“Where are your foster sons?”

“They’re attending the United States Coast Guard Academy and starting their second class summer where they receive damage control training, weapon qualifications, navigation rules certification, aviation internship, sail training program, and three weeks as members of the cadre, who train the incoming Swabs.”

“So they’ll be entering their senior year?”

“No, their junior year. The summer activities come before the school year, not after. During 2010 they attended Swab summer and entered school as Swabs or fourth classmen. The summer of 2011, they attended third class summer and entered the school as third classmen. This summer, they’re attending second class summer and will enter school as second classmen. The summer of 2013, they’ll attend first class summer and enter school as first classmen. Consider the term classmen as gender neutral, about one-third of the cadets are women.”

“How long will they have to serve after they graduate?”

“Five years.”

“So, do they come here in the summer?”

“No they don’t come here. We emphasized frugality while they lived with us and all they receive is a Stipend. We could easily afford to bring them home on leaves, but they’ve written and said they were using their leaves to learn more about the country. Education is much more than what a person gets from books and classes Jason. In order to really understand this country, a person has to learn about the history of the United States. What better place to do that can there be than where the American Revolution occurred?”

“Yeah huh? I understand.”

“What are you majoring in?”

“History; I’d like to get a master’s degree or a PhD and teach American History.”

“Teaching is an honorable profession.”

“I understand that you taught math.”

“Yes I did, for many years, 1977 through this past Christmas vacation, 33½ years.”

“How long have David and you been married, if that’s not too personal.”

“Not at all, Jason. We were married on September 11th 2001.”

“I don’t know why, but from observing the two of you, I thought you’d been married much longer. I told myself *they’ve been married for over thirty years.*”

“We dated since we were juniors in High School Jason, excluding the period between 1971 and 1977 when I was in college in Jonesboro. A couple who dates for all those years becomes comfortable with each other. David had his career in the Army and I had

my teaching career. They simply were not compatible. So, I waited until he retired from the Army and put on, what do they call it, a full court press.”

“How long did it take you to snag him?”

“He called me on Wednesday to invite me to the housewarming party for this home. I came by Friday night to help him get ready for the next day. We were married four days later on Tuesday, 9/11. We dated a very long time and were ready for the next step.”

“What do you make of these terrorist acts?”

“Were they terrorist acts? Where would terrorists get six bombs estimated to be in the five megaton range and three more in the one megaton range? They would probably have a street value of over a billion dollars. If they were terrorist acts, they were state sponsored.”

“But who would do such a thing?”

“Put your thinking cap on and answer the following questions. Who hates the US and Israel enough to have a motive. Who has the means; there are ten members of the nuclear club now. Who had the opportunity? Assume, if you will, that the motive was bombing Iran. Iran is the newest member of the nuclear club. It’s been six months since the Israelis bombed Iran with the US providing air cover. Iran has hated the US since 1979. They probably hate us more now. Everyone knows Iran hates Israel, as do most of the Middle Eastern states. But who among the other Middle Eastern states has nuclear weapons?”

“Pakistan hasn’t been too happy with the US since we killed bin Laden,”

“I’ll grant you that Jason. But all US forces were out of Iraq and mostly out of Afghanistan before Israel bombed Iran. Why would the Pakistanis care?”

“What do you mean?”

“The US was still providing aid to Pakistan Jason. They would be cutting off their nose to spite their face.”

“I thought it was cutting off their ear to spite their face.”

“Van Gogh did that because he thought his ear was unsymmetrical. The expression using nose is much older than that, look it up on Wiki, if it’s working.”

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 32

Later that evening the President addressed the United States.

My fellow Americans, I come to you in a time of great sorrow. Six or more American cities were destroyed as were three cities in Israel. Initial consensus has been that the country of Iran conducted or sponsored the attacks. We will not rush to judgment.

When our intelligence community and that of other nations supplies us with concrete data, we will act and not before. When I last addressed the nation on New Year's Eve I announced the bombing of Iran by Israel with the support of our naval air forces. What I omitted from that announcement was that the attack was done with the full knowledge and concurrence of Russia and Russia agreed to mediate any opposition from the People's Republic of China.

Our intelligence services, MI6, FSB and the Mossad are gathering data and pursuing every avenue of approach until we have a hard and fast answer. Once we have that answer, we will act on it, of that you may rest assured. Any action taken against the guilty party will only occur with the concurrence of the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel and Russia. To the extent that it may be necessary to consult with the People's Republic of China, Russia has once again offered to intercede.

My administration had expected a response to the attack on Iran and for that reason the troops returning from Afghanistan were not released immediately to return to their posts. When it appeared evident that no such response was likely, the troops were returned to their posts, camps, stations or armories between May 15th and May 31st.

Additionally, we have elected to replace the M16s and M4s in current use by our armed forces with superior firearms, the HK416 and 417. The weapon was under evaluation by the US Marines Corps as a replacement for their M-249 SAW. Heckler and Koch have worked around the clock for the past year producing the replacement firearms both in the United States and in Germany.

The first issue of the firearms will be to the US Army and the US Marine Corps with the Air Force and Navy following soon thereafter. It was necessary for Secretary Panetta to direct the Army into compliance with my directive. As you may well know, the Army issued a \$375 million purchase order for additional M4 carbines.

Those funds were intercepted, if you will, and redirected to Heckler and Koch in April of 2011 over the objection of the Joint Chiefs. It is bad enough that we have our young people fighting wars around the world. We should not handicap them with inferior firearms. I have further directed that the M9 pistol be reevaluated. It was adopted to conform to NATO, but is it the best we can provide our fighting men and women? If so, why do our Special Operations Commands cling to the reliable M1911 and firearms based on that design, in .45ACP?

We can't begin cleanup of our destroyed cities anytime soon. Consequently, the facilities destroyed in the attacks will be rebuilt in different locations. The destroyed ports were the lifeblood of our nation, shipping nearly as much outbound cargo as they received.

We will persevere. We will overcome this tragedy. We will hold those responsible accountable. We are a nation of many religions therefore rather than joining me in The Lord's Prayer, I ask all of you at home to offer up a prayer of your choice for our nation.

Thank you and good night. God Bless America.

"I'll be damned; he just might get himself reelected. I read an article in the December 15, 2011 Los Angeles Times. I printed out a copy because, frankly, I was shocked. Let me get it for you to read."

"Here you go, read this."

A rising tide of exports has been flowing through the nation's busiest seaport complex this year, helped by a weak dollar and a strengthening US manufacturing sector.

In November, more US goods than ever before moved out of the Port of Los Angeles to foreign destinations, with 195,878 outbound cargo containers, up 15% from the same month last year.

For the 11-month period ended Nov. 30, the port sent 1.9 million containers to foreign shores, surpassing its annual record of 1.8 million boxes, set in 2010.

Goods moving through the port for sale in Asia and other world markets included manufactured items such as integrated circuits and micro assemblies, agricultural goods, raw materials and discretionary consumer items such as California wines.

A weak US dollar made these goods more affordable, but the tepid domestic economy also has forced Americans to find new income through foreign markets.

"It has been a robust year for exports," said Jock O'Connell, an international trade expert with Beacon Economics. "On an inflation-adjusted basis, this may, for example, turn out to be the best year ever for California exports."

Traditionally, imports have been the dominant news at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, which rank first and second, respectively, in the nation in the number of cargo containers handled.

The neighboring ports move more than 40% of the nation's Asian imports. But the big story this year has been the growth in foreign markets for goods through the Los Angeles Customs District and California as a whole.

“Finished goods are also part of the rising export picture, and that is really good news for the California and US economies,” said John Husing, an economist who concentrates on international trade and its effect on the Inland Empire.

Exports also have been strong at other US ports. And although US export volume is expected to increase by nearly 7% this year, some experts project that the growth rate could be much slower next year.

In California, exports this year include \$5.26 billion in electronics such as integrated circuits and micro assemblies; \$5.2 billion in “electrical apparatus for line telephony,” including mobile phone components; \$2.54 billion in semiconductor devices; and \$2.39 billion in industrial machinery, including computers, O’Connell said.

Locally, the surge of exports has been seen through the entire Los Angeles Customs District, which includes both ports and air freight moving through Los Angeles International and Ontario airports, said Ferdinando Guerra, an economist specializing in international trade for the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.

All of the top 10 export categories for the Los Angeles Customs District are up, with the exception of aircraft and aircraft parts, Guerra said. Part of the surge has been growth in new foreign markets, and some old ones.

Guerra said that Australia rose to the No. 4 spot in terms of exports from the Los Angeles Customs District, moving ahead of Taiwan. India’s burgeoning middle class made it the fastest-growing foreign market for locally exported goods. The \$2.6 billion in sales of goods to India through October was enough to put it in the top 10 among foreign markets for the LA Customs District for the first time, Guerra said.

Indonesia. Malaysia and Vietnam also showed a growing appetite for goods shipped through the Los Angeles Customs District.

One of those benefiting is Los Angeles entrepreneur Alvin Lin, 42, vice president, chief sales officer and board member for CA88 Wine Inc. of downtown Los Angeles.

Lin’s company is so named to denote that his wines come from California, and they also use the number 88, which is considered a sign of good luck in China, which is his main export market.

In just two years, Lin’s business has exploded. In 2010, Lin said CA88 shipped a total of seven 20-foot-long cargo containers, or about 12,600 bottles, for sale in China. Starting in January, Lin said his business, which has about 15 employees, will be shipping four 20-foot containers of wine every month.

“We’re selling to night entertainment locations, hotels, pubs, specialty stores. California wines are now considered among the best in the world in China, and the depreciation of the dollar has been a great incentive to buy them,” Lin said.

Imports also increased in November at the Port of Los Angeles, up 6.2% to 354,313 containers. Overall, including empties, the L.A. port's business grew 4% to 694,109 containers in November. Through 11 months, 7.3 million containers have moved through the port, an increase of nearly 1% from 2010.

At Long Beach, which lost a terminal operator to Los Angeles a year ago, preliminary numbers for November showed a decline in imports of 15.6% and a decline in exports of 22%.

Combined, the two ports have handled 3.2 million export containers through the first 11 months of this year and are on pace to top the record set last year of 4.4 million export containers.

“Interesting, but what did you think of his speech?”

“Jack, at least he knows the difference between a 9mm, a .45 Colt and a .45ACP. The Hk416s and 417s are very fine firearms. We bought 4 of the HK416s and 4 of the HK417s, all with grenade launchers and silencers in the longest barrel length available, 19.9” on the 416 and an accurized 20” barrel on the 417. They were not inexpensive, let me tell you.”

“You didn’t mention that.”

“No I didn’t, but at the time you folks were having a hard time, financially.”

“You said four.”

“Yes I did; one for Joanne, one for Sean, one for Colin and one for me, in each model. Quit bellyaching, you have a Super Match with a suppressor and good optics while the boys have Joanne and Marion’s Loadeds. And, neither boy has a Tac-50, not yet anyway.”

“Not yet?”

“Sorry Joanne, I had the chance to get a pair identical to the two we have with the Jet Suppressor, etc. So, I jumped on it like duck on a June bug.”

“Did you get Mk 211 or just A-MAX?”

“I got A-MAX which we can use as necessary. I did pick up 20 cans of Mk 211, but you know about that. We can use it as needed, too.”

“I have my horses; I suppose I have nothing to complain about. I must say you have about as much money tied up in Tac-50s as I have in horses. That is funny in a way be-

cause we have way more guns than we can shoot at any given time. I'm sometimes surprised you aren't on the board of directors of the NRA."

"It's too high of a profile for retired Sergeant Major. I've always attempted to avoid having a high profile."

"So what do you think of his Speech David?"

"Like I said Jack, he just might get himself reelected. I won't vote for him, but if the Republicans don't run a good candidate, I may not vote. The way those debates have been going, I've yet to find anyone I'd vote for, including Ron Paul. One week Mitt has the lead and the next week it's Newt followed by who knows who the week after. I'd have a lot of trouble voting for Newt, he's Washington establishment from way back.

"Perry lost my vote with some of his positions as did Michele. Huntsman hasn't impressed me and while Santorum seems like a nice guy; nice guys finish last."

"Don't hold back, how do you really feel?"

"It will be Obama by a nose."

"Bite your tongue."

"Sorry Jack, mark my words, we're going to have four more years of Obama despite his current showing in the polls."

"So, why wouldn't you vote if you feel that way?"

"I have always voted Republican and I won't change that. And if they don't have an electable candidate this time, I'm not going to vote. No more votes for Sarah Who."

"Palin, her name was Palin."

"She was a former a member of the Wasilla City Council and mayor of Wasilla. After an unsuccessful run for lieutenant governor, she was appointed Chairman of the Alaska Oil and Gas Conversation Commission. She was youngest person and first woman to be elected Governor of Alaska from December 2006 until her resignation in July 2009. Like I said, Sarah Who?"

"Did we jump the gun a second time?"

"So it would appear; that said it's always better to choose the safest choice. I can refill your gas tanks if you choose to return home for the moment. Otherwise, you can stay and Jason can care for the horses and we can selectively harvest some timber. We have enough softwood but there are some oaks here on my property it wouldn't hurt to

harvest. One thing, though, don't cut the black walnut trees... whatever you do, don't cut them. If necessary, we can mark them so you'll know to avoid them."

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 33

“We wouldn’t want to impose David.”

“You’d be doing us a favor. We have 105ft³ stored in our freezers and some of it has to be used up or it’ll freezer burn. Wal-Mart is about 5 miles away and we can rotate some of our STS. Jason can help you since I bought a pair Stihl chainsaws, a splitter and wood chipper/leaf shredder. Marion can help Joanne can for half of whatever they put up and I pay Jason and you, say, \$15 an hour.”

“Marion?”

“If something really bad did happen, we might not get here in time.”

“Jason?”

“I’d earn more money for college? Are you kidding? I’m in.”

“Well David, the majority rules, we’ll stay. After breakfast tomorrow, we’ll paint circles of the trees you want harvested and Xs on those you don’t. Why not cut the black walnut trees?”

“They’re old trees and because the density of the timber have long clear boles. They have to be worth a fortune. I want to let my investment grow.”

“Anything else?”

“Don’t disturb the wild blackberries or strawberries. I’ll point those out in case you don’t know what they look like. You’ll want to avoid the blackberries anyway, they have thorns. If you have to drop a softwood tree or two to have a clean drop zone for an oak, we’ll haul the branches and logs back to the house whole and stack them so they can cure. I’ll shred the leaves and small branches for compost.”

“You’re using the manure and bedding for compost?”

“Yes, plus the sawdust and the output of the chipper/shredder. I add earthworms and a composting compound that is probably a mix of bacteria. Best fertilizer for the garden and planting medium for the greenhouse you’ve ever seen.”

“Do you have a log skid?”

“Nope. We do have 12 horses broken to saddle and harness. We’ll figure something out.”

His question created a quandary. Although broken to harness, we’d never used the horses under harness and didn’t have any harnesses. I didn’t really know what a log

skid was; I just knew we didn't have anything of that nature. Maybe we wouldn't haul the logs and branches back to the house whole. He'd been delivering cut up logs in the past maybe that was the best approach. Besides, cut up green logs should cure faster, shouldn't they?

Then there was the separate issue of Marion's housecleaning job. We could certainly afford to pay her the same amount as she was earning cleaning the current house she cleaned for cleaning our house. Plus Joanne and I could use the help canning due to the amount of garden produce.

The next morning, after breakfast, I sat Jack down and suggested that first, he return home and tie up any loose ends. He should make sure his propane tank was full, etc. He should leave the furnace on set at 55°, just in case. Anything they'd need over the next six months should be loaded up and hauled down to our place.

I then explained my analysis of the skidding issue and that it made the most sense to me that he continue to cut up and haul the wood rather than trying to skid it to the house. He said fine, it was more money in his pocket. When we had everything resolved, we took red and green spray paint and marked the black walnuts with red Xs and the white oaks with green circles. Next he marked the softwood trees he'd have to remove to allow clear drop zones and access paths to the hardwoods.

The arborist had come out earlier and tended to the black walnut trees. He said they were very healthy and he did a nominal amount of trimming to improve their health. He went on to say they were marketable trees with their long boles and 4' diameter trunks but would continue to appreciate in value if left unharvested. The diameter of a tree is measured at breast height, anywhere from ~51" to ~59" above the ground. Average it and call it 55".

When they began the harvest and deliveries of the wood, they'd describe it as soft or hard, live or dead. I started splitting dead hardwood in one pile and setting aside the other three in separate piles. This went on for about 3 months. When they cleared all that they were going to clear, Jack, Marion and Jason returned to their home to check on things and get his log splitter.

With two splitters and three people, we had a large enough stack of firewood to attract the attention of would be thieves. We were just far enough off the road from Flippin to the lake to avoid most of that attention.

It was the end of September and the President hadn't addressed the nation since his address on June 30th. I did learn that it was a crime to transport stolen wood, by the way. If the wood was stolen from a National Forest, it was a federal crime, interstate transport or not. Like Jack said, they could only lock us up once. On the other hand, he didn't bring up how long we could be locked up for.

We had more registered NFA items than not. And, if it weren't for the Hughes Amendment, all of them would have been registered. Our government, for all of its good intentions, sometimes creates criminals. I can't believe Reagan signed that law. Firearm owners have been protected since it was enacted. I don't feel much protected; I feel more like an abused child.

While Joanne and I didn't have one of everything, as firearms went, we had all that we wanted with a few extras, Sean and Colin's firearms. We're both gun nuts, so sue us. Ammo could perhaps be described by the number of wars we could fight. Perhaps, but how was one to know exactly how much ammunition any given war would require? I hadn't shot any ammunition in the Gulf War in combat, just in practice.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

Thank you. It has been three months since my last address to the nation. During that period of time we have determined, beyond any doubt, that the June 30th attacks were made by the country of Iran. The weapons were smuggled into the United States in a ship carrying Persian carpets and miscellaneous cargo from other Arab countries.

Our customs officials were suspicious and examined the cargo carefully, which is well documented. Nevertheless, those six shielded weapons were amongst the cargo. From there they were transported to storage lockers near their eventual sites of detonation and stored, apparently abandoned.

It is believed that the weapons were on timers in the event they couldn't be moved to their ultimate destinations. They were moved to their final destinations by parties unknown and the vans carrying the weapons abandoned once more; abandoned only so long as it took the drivers to move to places of safety.

Having identified the culprit has left us no better off. Iran is claiming through the People's Republic of China that they acted in retaliation on the New Year's Eve bombing of their country. President Putin has indicated that Russia will no longer support the United States and Israel if they retaliate against the retaliation, regardless of their previous position under President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin.

At this point in time, all options are on the table. These options run from doing nothing to using our most powerful weapons against Iran. I have taken the question under advisement and we are considering which option to implement.

Thank you and good night. God Bless America.

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“We’re damned if we do and damned if we don’t. I don’t know about the rest of you but I wouldn’t want to be in his shoes at the moment.”

“You’re right David, I wouldn’t trade places with him for all the tea in China.”

“Come on you two; is that the best those 52 years of collective military experience can offer?”

“Joanne, if the President does nothing he will avoid a possible nuclear exchange with Russia and China. If we nuke Iran, the other extreme, it seems apparent that it will cause a full out nuclear exchange. The answer lies somewhere in the middle and whatever he decides, he needs plausible deniability. Plausible deniability is a legal concept. It refers to lack of evidence proving an allegation. Standards of proof vary in civil and criminal cases. In civil cases, the standard of proof is *preponderance of the evidence* whereas in a criminal matter, the standard is *beyond a reasonable doubt*. If your opponent lacks incontrovertible proof (evidence) of their allegation, you can *plausibly deny* the allegation even though it may be true.”

“That lets a missile attack out, for the most part. It also lets nuclear weapons out. What do we have left?”

“Conventional bombs delivered without any direct evidence as to the source of the bomber.”

“The B-2s delivering J-DAMs would fit the criteria. With Obama having just made the announcement, what if an operation was already occurring. Obama just said that that the matter was under advisement, ergo, careful consideration. That implies that no decision has been reached. What if the B-2s were already over Iran and starting their bombing runs?”

“I don’t know if that would fly. The United States has the only fleet of stealth bombers.”

“That the beauty of it; there would be no radar records of the bombers, anywhere, and if the bombs were dropped at night, there would be no satellite pictures of the aircraft even if there were satellite pictures of the explosions. How many J-DAMs can a B-2 carry?”

“The B-2 can carry 16 2000 pound class weapons. Times twenty is 320 tons of precisely placed explosives. But, the B-2s would have to be on the ground before daylight.”

“What’s that base in the Indian Ocean, Diego something?”

“Diego Garcia. That would be roughly 3,250 miles one way. At cruise speed at 40,000’, the plane has a range of 6,900 miles. Damn, they could do it and they could be refueled on the return leg, if necessary.”

“They could be refueled on the outbound leg from Diego Garcia, too, David.”

“But, I’m sure the Russians keep track of our B-2s.”

“Assuming that they do, they can’t track them at night. So if at sundown they were at Diego Garcia and at sunup they were east bound over the Indian Ocean headed for Guam, who could prove when they took off? That would be especially so if they were refueled on both the outbound and the return leg.”

“Jack?”

“It could work if Russia didn’t have a spy planted on Diego Garcia.”

“That’s true... but the alternative is that Russia would give up a spy just to engage in a Thermonuclear War. Face it, Putin has been charge in Russia since 1999. Did he reverse himself or is HE looking for plausible deniability? I think the latter makes more sense.”

“Like Sergeant Schultz on *Hogan’s Heroes*?”

“Right, he didn’t see anything or know anything. We’re at UCT minus 6, adjusted for Daylight Saving Time makes that UTC minus 5. Tehran is at UTC plus 3.5 or 8.5 hours ahead of us. It is 8pm local meaning that the time in Tehran is 4:30am. If all the assumptions we’ve made are right, our B-2s should be east bound over the Indian Ocean headed for Guam.”

“What if Iran has more bombs, David?”

“Joanne, if they had them, I believe they would have used them. Regardless, the only countries that can reach the US with ICBMs are Russia, the UK, France, China and Israel. The Indians have SLBMs that could reach us as do the others and the UK only has Trident D-5s. Well, the Israel submarine missile is a cruise missile, but it is nuke capable.”

“So it’s China or nobody?”

“That would be my best guess. China, more than anyone beside the US, is the biggest loser due to the attacks.”

Our wild speculation turned out to be exactly what happened. If the Russians knew, they weren’t talking. China speculated and filed a weak protest in the UN. Not the destroyed New York headquarters but at Geneva, Switzerland, the second largest UN facility. The complaint included not only the retaliation that the US was suspected of doing against Iran, but the acknowledged joint Israeli-US action. The complaint was ignored and then dropped.

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Once again, we'd avoided the fickle finger of fate. That was fine; we just bought more ammunition and additional PPE. We now had enough for 16 adults, 4 infants and 4 children, all from Approved Gas Masks.

We had managed to rotate through the critical frozen goods and had replaced them with fresh. This time we bought a full beef and three hogs. One hog was processed routinely, the second had the hams, bacon and loins smoked and the third was added to the leftovers from the first two and turned into whole hog sausage. As usual, we rendered the leaf lard by the wet and dry methods. Got some pretty nice baby back ribs out of the deal, too... six full racks. Those nice boneless pork loins they sell in the store result from cutting off the ribs and selling them separately, for more than they're worth. They're at least 50% bone.

Late fall was upon us and all seemed right with the world, at least from the viewpoint of the United States. Construction had begun on three new west coast ports with dredging operations taking place even as port facilities were constructed. In a way, it was a boon to our economy; by Presidential directive, the ports would be built by Americans using American products from the concrete to the steel for the container cranes.

After the budget was balanced and a plan in place to repay the debt, the extra money realized by not fighting wars in two far off countries was redirected into military acquisitions. A second Ford class carrier had its keel laid; production of the Joint Strike Fighter was increased to record levels; and the number of DDGs under construction was increased. The problems with Obamacare were resolved with a balance being struck between the demands of the Republicans and Democrats. I'm not trying to tell you there was a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage, there were more cars than garages; but you get the idea.

It was election time and I didn't vote for the first time since I could legally vote. It didn't matter, the President got reelected and it wasn't even close. If he were going to pull any crap, now was the time, he couldn't run for a third term. Did he really know the difference from a SAA, an M1911 and an M9? He'd been persuaded to replace the M16s and M4s with reliable firearms.

By Presidential directive, with the full support of Congress, the US readopted the .45ACP in an improved M1911A2. It had many of the features found in the Taurus PT1911 because Taurus had shown that a quality firearm could be built for an affordable price. I'm not saying Taurus got the contract or even that they bid on it, but their pistol became the standard against which the final choice would be measured.

It should be noted that the USMC changed their policy concerning who would carry an M9. The Marine Corps Times reported plans in July 2007 for all officers below the rank of Colonel and all SNCOs to be issued the M4 carbine instead of the M9. The new as-

signment policy will still assign M9s to Marine Colonels and above and Navy Petty Officer First Class and above. It was sort of out of the frying pan and into the fire.

The United States Coast Guard has replaced most of its M9s with the SIG P229 DAK, though some M9s remain in service with certain units. The problem wasn't so much the firearm as it was the cartridge. SIG sells good firearms; they're made by J. P. Sauer und Sohn, in Germany. There were other examples of organizations choosing the wrong cartridge; have you ever heard of the .40 S&W? That's a 10mm short adopted by the FBI because, according to Fleataxi, their wrists were too limp. At least, that's what Joanne told me. God bless John Moses Browning! I don't know why the Coast Guard adopted the cartridge, maybe because it was a compromise between the 9mm and .45ACP.

When I enlisted, the M1911A1 was the official sidearm of the Army. By the time I got to that point in time where my issue arm was a sidearm, they were converting to the M9. So between an M16A1, later A2, and the M9, I couldn't win for love or money. The Marine Corps was the first to adopt the A2 beginning in the early and mid-1980s. We began using them in the late-1980s. By the late 1980s, I was carrying a sidearm. It was more reliable than the M16, but that was all it had going for it.

Can you imagine how difficult it was for people with small hands to cope with a double column magazine and the increased grip thickness? That could be said for the P-14 as well as the Browning Hi-Power. I'm dwelling too much on firearms and should get back to what happened the winter of 2012-13. It's easy to summarize, the same damned thing that happened 201 years earlier.

The 1811–1812 New Madrid earthquakes were an intense intraplate earthquake series beginning with an initial pair of very large earthquakes on December 16, 1811. These earthquakes remain the most powerful earthquakes to hit the eastern United States in recorded history. On January 23rd, an earthquake of corresponding intensity occurred in the Missouri bootheel and on February 7th, another powerful quake struck the bootheel.

When epicenters of modern earthquakes are plotted on a map, three trends become apparent. First is the general northeast-southwest trend paralleling the trend of the Reelfoot Rift, in Arkansas, south of where the epicenters turn northwest. This is a right-lateral strike-slip fault system parallel to the Reelfoot Rift.

The second is the southeast to northwest trend that occurs just southwest of New Madrid. This trend is a stepover thrust fault known as the Reelfoot Fault, associated with the Tiptonville dome and the impoundment of Reelfoot Lake. Epicenter locations on this fault are more spread out because the fault surface is inclined and dips into the ground, towards the south, at around forty degrees. Slip is towards the northeast. Motion on this fault in the 1811–1812 series created waterfalls on the Mississippi.

The third line, extending northeast from the northwestern end of the Reelfoot Fault is another right-lateral strike-slip fault, termed New Madrid North.

The epicenters of over 4,000 earthquakes can be identified from seismic measurements taken since 1974. It can be seen that the earthquakes originate from the seismic activity of the Reelfoot Rift. The zone is called the *New Madrid Seismic Zone*.

That's background. Jonesboro, Arkansas is in the New Madrid Seismic Zone and when the earthquake occurred just before Christmas, Jonesboro was all but leveled. We're about 170 miles west, line of sight, from New Madrid and about 111 miles west-northwest of Jonesboro. It must have caught us just right and had we not been aware the possibility, however remote, we'd have had half our furnishings toppled over onto the floor.

By now, I'd read several Patriot fiction stories and was aware of what they did in Palmdale, California to protect against earthquake damage. It wasn't cheap, but we had the pipe connections to the propane tank and a section between the line and the shelter wall and between the shelter wall and the generator replaced with high pressure hose. We also did it where the propane line entered the house. It must have worked; we didn't have any gas leaks.

Most of the furniture in the house, basement and shelter was strapped in place, some by the previous owner, some after I/we moved in. We lost a few kerosene lamp chimneys, but June had spares. Let me tell you what we did have, firewood everywhere. All those carefully placed stacks of firewood tumbled down. Our first inclination was to begin to restack the wood. Then, we had an aftershock and changed our minds. Joanne went to tend to the horses and I turned on cable news to see what they were saying. I heard Joanne come back later after settling the horses.

"David, why don't we have any water pressure?"

"Uh..."

"Uh... what?"

"I was trying to decide if we need to talk to the well guy or a plumber."

"It has to be between the pressure tank and the well. That tells me to call well guy. How do you know who put in the well, did you have it put in?"

"No it came with the house. There were a bunch of papers that came with the house telling who had done what. I remember seeing the invoice for the well, so I'll look through those papers."

"Do you know where they are?"

"I haven't seen them in ten years. I think I put them in the shelter cabinet where the radios are stored. I'll go look."

“I found them. Look up the guy in the phone book in case his number has changed.”

“It’s changed all right; did you look at the date on the invoice?”

“Huh, 1971, the year we graduated from High School. I guess he did good work if the well and pump lasted that long.”

“Want me to pick someone from the yellow pages?”

“Sure.”

“Here’s a guy with the same last name. You don’t suppose...?”

“He’d have to be retired by now, but try it, what do we have to lose?”

So she calls this guy and I’m sitting there hearing one side of the conversation. It’s like that German code from WW II trying to figure out what’s going on. I got a cup of coffee and sat down at the dinette.

“I spoke to the son of the man who installed the well. He has all the records of every well his father drilled, with depth, size, pump data, pipe locations and so forth. He said he’d come but he’d have to charge us time and a half. He went on to say that that was still less than a plumber would cost because the plumber wouldn’t have the information he has.

“The pipes are below the frost line for obvious reasons. Well below is how he phrased it. He and his brother will thaw the ground with heaters and use a trencher to get close to the line. He said they’d have to go all the way from the well to the house to check for any breaks. However, before they do that, they’ll check out the well pump to make sure it’s working ok. They’ll be here in about 30 minutes. Oh, they’ll bring a replacement pump, just in case.”

They got there when he told Joanne they would. They set up two kerosene heaters plugged into one of our outside outlets for the fans. Then they checked the pump and found it to be defective. They spent quite some time replacing it and making sure it worked properly. Next, they went into the basement where the water line entered the house and checked the pressure. The pressure was significantly lower indicating there was a leak.

They went back outside and began with the trencher, digging down to just above the line. They suddenly had water in the trench and quickly killed the power to the well pump. After the water soaked in, they were able to dig down to the line. I knew we were in trouble when he said, “Well, hello, what do we have here?”

I looked and the water line ran directly towards the shelter.

“Do you have any idea where this line leads Mr. Burns?”

“Yes there’s a storm shelter.”

“How do you access it?”

“From the basement.”

“Oh, one of those survivalist types, huh?”

“The shelter came with the house. This is tornado country, it was a selling point.”

“May we have access to check the water pressure inside?”

“The sink be ok?”

“Should be.”

When we got to the house I asked Joanne to open the door to the shelter. I offered the two a cup of coffee or tea. They both took coffee. When Joanne returned, I took them downstairs and through the now open blast door and tunnel.

“Whoever built this was definitely a *crackpot survivalist*, a blast door and a tunnel. What are there, four bedrooms and a bath?”

“Three quarter bath and the water heater is in the bath.”

“Well you don’t have much pressure here either, so the best bet would be where the line to the shelter is spliced into the main line. I don’t mean to be rude, but would you considering giving us a tour?”

“Sure, but some of the doors are locked and I didn’t bring my keys. I can tell you what is in the rooms however.”

“That’s excellent. We do get tornados but after those attacks and this morning’s earthquake, a shelter might not be a bad idea.”

“Through here. This tunnel leads to the generator room at the end, but there are two rooms along the way. The first door is to the armory and the second is to the storeroom. Sorry, they’re both locked. This room has the generator. It’s not a new model, although I’m sure they make a similar model. It was built by Onan and is a 15 kilowatt. There is a 200 amp automatic transfer switch there on the wall. The electrical mains feed into the ATS and from there to the main breaker panel in the basement. About 30 amps of power are also available to the shelter above the 100 amps available to the house.”

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 35

“Thanks for the tour. Let’s see if we can get this wrapped up today.”

They worked their magic and an hour later, the pipe was repaired, the trench filled and he was handing me an invoice.

“That’s seven hours times two times one point five at \$15 per hour or \$315 labor plus the cost of the new pump. We’ve had that a while so I knocked off 10% of the MSRP. The current list is \$499.99, but I cut it to \$450. It’s a Red Line 1 horsepower Deep Well Submersible Pump (3-Wire 230V) with Control Box. It pumps 22 gallons per minute and is their number one seller. The total is \$765. Did you check your faucet?”

“Same pressure as before the problem came up.”

“The faucet water pressure is a function of your pressure tank. We can replace that to provide more pressure or capacity if you wish.”

“Thank you no. Seven-sixty-five? Cash or check?”

“Check is fine but cash is preferred.”

I paid the man and they left. He could sell me more capacity, but a simple tweak on the pressure switch would up the pressure.

“He was right; do you want higher water pressure?”

“It’s fine. Why did you cut him off like that?”

“He was right; the faucet pressure is a function of the pressure tank. We don’t need a new tank to provide more pressure. We would only need a new tank if we wanted more capacity. Since the new well pump has a great pumping rate of 22 gallons per minute as opposed to the old 12 gallons per minute pump, we can add capacity if we choose.”

“I can’t see any reason to do that.”

“Just checking; it is something I could do without hiring a plumber.”

“Hang on here we go again,” Joanne said as we were hit with another aftershock.

It had been like that on and off all day. We didn’t feel the smaller aftershocks but periodically, especially near the beginning, the aftershocks had been nearly as intense as the earthquake.

The first earthquake measured 7.8 M_w . We had a second quake in late January the measured 7.7 M_w . It wasn't a complete repeat of 1811–12; we only had half as many major earthquakes. The two earthquakes didn't slow FEMA down, the whole region experienced damage. Although Jonesboro was the hardest hit, Memphis had its share of damage, on a smaller scale. So did much of the bootheel, especially New Madrid, Missouri.

We hadn't seen much of Jack, Marion or Jason. I called to check on them after the first and second earthquakes and he said they were doing fine. Jason would be returning to Phoenix in August to return to college. I mentioned the firewood problem and said when it warmed up a little, I'd be glad to hire Jason to restack it. Jack said he was sure Jason would do it; he was trying to accumulate all the money he could for college. With that in mind, I only stacked a small amount of driest hardwood for the stove/fireplace.

One of the major problems Joanne had to deal with when we had both earthquakes was the horses. They put up quite a fuss. I mentioned that Joanne had checked on the horses the day of the first earthquake but didn't relate the difficulties she had. There was one Joanne and twelve upset horses. She told me she walked down the center aisle and calmed each horse for a moment before moving the next. After a dozen or so passes she had them calmed and returned to the house where she discovered the water problem.

With the second earthquake, I checked the faucet to make sure we had water and we both went to the barn to calm the horses. It took just as long with the two of us as it had when she'd done it alone. She suggested and I agreed it was probably a function of elapsed time as much as it was the comfort we offered.

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Jason called and came by in early March to restack the firewood. There were probably eighty plus cords of cut, split and stacked firewood down. I told him we'd go \$15 an hour and meals. He suggested that he could take a bunk in the shelter and I told him nonsense, he could take one of the twin beds.

He started off ok, but it wasn't long before the stooping and reaching got to his back. He went into Flippin and picked up a back brace from Wal-Mart. You've seen them, haven't you? Ace Lumbar Support is the product name. It took a day or two to get his back to quit hurting and he was back to where he started, maybe two cords per hour. We actually got off cheap at \$600 plus meals.

Next, Jason split and stacked the cut up wet wood that I'd never done anything with. Before it was all said and done, Jason had earned \$2,100 towards college. I paid him in cash, nothing to report to the IRS.

Joanne had a lot of gold and gold had gone up to \$2,600 before settling around \$2,350. Silver hovered between 47:1 and 53:1 of the gold price. Sometimes gold would go up

and silver would drop and vice versa. Other times they'd both go up or both drop, precious metals were not for the short term investor. Simply stated, you bought it and held it. The value stayed even or slightly above the inflation rate, long term. One day a roll of silver dimes might be \$100 and weeks later, \$150 only to fall back to \$120. But if you bought rolls of coins and removed the scarce pre-65 dimes, quarter and halves, all they cost you was some time and the face value. Half dollars were the best choice.

Another thing a person could do was attend estate sales. Once in a while, a coin collection would be up for sale. As long as the bidding didn't go too high, there were bargains to be had. The collections never went for face value, but at times the collection sold for less than the silver or copper value. Yes, copper. They quit making pennies from 95% copper during 1982 because cost of producing the 95% copper penny began to exceed one cent.

In fact, the United States has no *Real Money*. The banknotes are Federal Reserve Notes, back by nothing intrinsic; the coins contain little, if any, intrinsic value. The one ounce gold Eagle has a legal face value of \$50 although they contain, at the moment, ~\$2,350 in gold value. The silver Eagle has a face value of \$1 although they contain, at the moment, \$44.26 – \$49.89 of silver value.

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Recently Joanne has been harping on the subject of bad things happening in threes. It seems that one of the authors insists that bad things happen in threes and the function is exponential, e.g., 3, 9, 27, 81. She went on to explain that one of the other authors had spoofed the theory in a story titled *3 Times Jinx*. What we have to worry about, she insists is the third event, but we were attacked by Iran and we had the earthquake late last year and early this year.

I recognized *3 Times Jinx* as one of Jerry's stories from his CD. I'll have to reread it to see which author claims bad things happen in threes. I brought up the pdf file and searched for *three*. Eventually I got a hit I could use. Tired Old Man, TOM, was the author who believed that bad things happened in threes.

So I checked some of TOM's stories on the CD that Joanne purchased from Jerry's website and eventually found what I was looking for. TOM's father had died in January of 2001, an aunt died shortly thereafter and 45 days after his father died, his stepmother died. And, as I continued to read, a 4th relative had died shortly thereafter and when the body count was done, it totaled nine, all in a space of less than one year.

Unusual, yes; proof, no. Considering that TOM was apparently in his late 60s or early 70s, the deaths were simply the ravages of time on the previous generation. Apparently TOM's family on his maternal side was large, numbering over 500 at last count. I wouldn't say categorically no, but I was highly doubtful. Still, it couldn't hurt to humor Joanne since she was a firm believer.

I did notice that TOM had listed a series of health problems including alcoholism which led to chronic pancreatitis and diabetes. He was a smoker and also had COPD, The diabetes had the side effect of diabetic neuropathy, numbness in the extremities, and it had caused cataracts requiring lens replacements. He had been operated on for suspected pancreatic cancer, but got lucky and only had cysts. The COPD had been diagnosed when he came to in a hospital after four days on an endotracheal tube. They had removed the tube but not the restraints. He does not like to be restrained, trust me.

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This year, we evaluated our LTS, STS and the content of our freezers. For one thing, we had too many freezers, three 25ft³ chest type, a 21ft³ upright and the 8ft³ in the kitchen refrigerator freezer. And, the meat was reasonably fresh and triple sealed. We started working our way through the STS and oldest meat. By late 2013, we had one of the 25ft³ nearly empty. We hadn't planted a garden beyond more onions, potatoes and peppers.

We had a lot more free time and went riding four days a week unless it rained. We offered Jack and Marion our oldest freezer when it was empty and if they wanted to pick it up. They now came every other weekend to go riding. Jason had headed for Phoenix on August 10th. Since our meat supply included a large number of good steaks and hundreds of pounds of hamburger, we wined and dined Jack and Marion every weekend they came over to ride.

During the week we had meatloaf, goulash, SOS, pasta with meat sauce and anything that used hamburger as a main ingredient, except for Hamburger Helper. We also ate our fair share of casseroles. After we had a freezer nearly empty, we moved the contents to the two newest freezers and Jack and Marion hauled the old freezer home. Joanne and I followed them home and I helped Jack unload and move the freezer to their basement.

“Jack, I don't know where you intend to buy your meat, but the locker plant in Mountain Home does a good job of butchering and cutting meat. We've been buying from them for years. We also add Hormel thick sliced bacon, Hormel Cure 81 half hams, and a case of butter from Wal-Mart when we add meat. Jimmy Dean is the best sausage. We also buy chicken quarters from Wal-Mart. Each piece is coated in ice and sold by the bag of either breast quarters or thigh quarters. It couldn't hurt to look into it.”

“Thanks, we'll look into it. The firewood business is picking up since I took on a partner. Or, he took me on. Paul knows most of the Ozarks and has connections everywhere. We don't get large jobs since it's just the two of us, but my half is more than I was making on my own.

“Paul got very lucky, he said, when he was asked to clear a few acres of ground for a customer who didn't have much money or know what he had. While it was mostly softwood, it contained some white oak and black walnut. He bid the job based on the soft-

wood and white oak values, coming to the total board feet of all the timber. The guy took the bid and Paul harvested six black walnut trees with a diameter of 3' or greater.

“You know what black walnut trees are worth, especially when they have long boles. It made him wealthy and he’s been looking for a similar deal since. I told him it was probably a once in a lifetime deal and he countered that there was always hope. One day not long after the second earthquake we got to visiting about preparedness.

“He said they, him, his wife and kids, had an above ground shelter and asked what I had. I told him I had a very good friend with a shelter just across Bull Shoals Lake. He questioned whether we’d have time to get to your place depending on what happened. I brought that up to Marion and she had a similar concern. We weren’t rolling in money and I asked Paul who built his shelter. He said he’d been a mason during his early days working for his father before he got into harvesting timber and that he’d built their shelter over the course of many weekends.

“I naturally raised the question if I could get him to help me build a shelter. He asked how big and I threw out 1,200ft³ for the sake of discussion. He told me he’d think about it and get back to me. Two weeks later, he handed me a plan for a 36ft square shelter. He said he knew it was about 100ft² larger than I mentioned but a square optimized the area of a rectangle; for an additional 12' of wall length (336-324=12), we got an additional 96ft². Then he asked if I was interested and I said we were. He handed me a bill of materials and said to let him know when we had the materials assembled.”

“Thereby implying he’d help you with the construction?”

“So it seemed. It took a while to buy the materials and when we had everything except for the concrete, we started building it on weekends. We raised a platform about 3' above ground level and compacted it until it was almost as solid as concrete. He borrowed a trencher from his father’s firm and we trenched out footings. You do know we’re on well water the same as you, right? The plan had penciled in outlines for the various fixtures and after Marion and I agreed to the layout, we put in the water line, propane line and sewage line connecting to our septic system.

“The concrete for the footings came to quite a bit because there were two sets of footings, one 144' long and a second 192' long. And that didn’t count the 3½” thick 1,296ft² floor. Thank God we had some money set aside for the first time in a long time. Anyway, he taught me to lay block but I was mostly mixing the mortar and hauling blocks.

“When the inside wall was 9' high, we started on the outside wall. We’d lay a few courses of block, fill the space and compact the earth with a borrowed tamper until we came close to the top of the inside wall. The outside wall ended up ~15½' tall for that segment. By then, Marion and I had enough saved up for the roof and he borrowed forms from his father’s firm and we formed it.

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“After the roof was poured, we waited for a month before we hauled soil up there and compacted it. Man, was that a chore. At that point in time, we had the box without the blast door or an air purification system. Paul’s next suggestion was to cover the overhead soil with bituminous, which he provided for no charge and we compacted as quickly as we could, totally sealing the top of the shelter.”

“Where are you in terms of completion?”

“Come on and I’ll show you. That’s as far as we’ve gotten until we can accumulate more money to invest in the project.”

“Rather massive isn’t it. By that I mean there’s no mistaking it for what it is, a bomb shelter.”

“It’s not much of a bomb shelter yet David; we have no blast door, no inside fixtures of any kind, no rooms and no equipment. The only thing we have is our RS 12000 and we haven’t moved it yet.”

“How much would it take to finish it?”

“I’d be guessing, ten to twelve thousand.”

“You have most of your weapons stored in our armory and you have your LTS food stored in our shelter storeroom. Plus you have a generator and a large propane tank. With the freezer we pawned off on you today, you’re not all that far from having it completed.”

I pulled out my checkbook and wrote him a check for \$15,000.

“This is a no interest loan; I expect to be paid back as you’re able, but no rush. Get a blast door and two Safe Cells from American Safe Room in Oregon. Get some meters from Radmeters4U. Buy some lumber and erect some walls and get the plumbing and kitchen fixtures installed. Be sure to insulate the interior walls for sound dampening. Joanne and I’ll help as we can and when you’re ready for it will move your firearms, ammunition and other munitions. We’ll bring over your LTS foods tomorrow. And, if you need help, I can still hammer a nail, install insulation and drywall. You can hire linoleum installed, lay tile yourself or go with indoor outdoor carpet. Personally, I’d go with the indoor outdoor polyester Berber carpet since it absorbs sound and is easy to care for.”

“I don’t know what to say, are you sure?”

“I wrote the check didn’t I? Yes I’m sure and Joanne will support me in this. How did you find time to go riding?”

“Everyone needs some rest David. I couldn’t put in 5 days a week harvesting timber and every weekend day building the shelter. Paul needed time with his family, too.”

“Are you chumming with them now?”

“Not really, considering the age difference.”

“Did you two ever get HK416s and 417s?”

“Wish in one hand and spit in the other... we don’t have money for some of the things it would be nice to have. Now ammo we have in abundance. We have 5.56 in M193, M855 and M855A1. We have some surplus 7.62, but most of it is M118LR. We’re good on both Lawman and Gold Dot in 9mm and .45ACP. And that doesn’t count what is stored in your armory. We have small amounts of M993 and M995 for those just in case situations. Our fifty caliber ammo is Hornady A-MAX and Mk 211 MP in a ratio of 80:20.”

“When we return tomorrow we’ll pull the trailer and bring all of your things over on one trip. We can place them in the shelter here and move things around as required.”

◦

Sean and Colin had graduated from the USCGA, had returned home to visit and pick up their firearms and ammunition early in 2013. Each had made arrangements for secure storage, off station, at their first postings. I’ll have to say, they looked especially fine in their dress whites when they’d dressed up for family photos.

When we did the family photos, I dressed up in my Army dress uniform to compliment the boys’ dress uniforms. In comparison these young men, I looked like a dried up old prune. Joanne had taken the pictures with her when we moved the freezer.

◦

“These are very nice pictures David. Here, Jack, look at them.”

“I hate to say it David, but compared to the two young officers in the photo, you’re showing your age.”

“Don’t I know it? I’m in good condition and could still get in the uniform but those two are slim and trim and really do look good in those dress whites. The thing about the Navy and Coast Guard is the number of different uniforms they have. It sure is different from the Army where we had utilities and Class As.”

“Do you still have your BDUs?”

“Both Joanne and I have BDUs and the new uniform, MultiCams. I mean to tell you it doesn’t seem to matter which environment you’re in, MultiCams blend in. I wouldn’t go

so far as to say they're perfect, but they're better than anything the Army used before. Plus they're available on the commercial market as well as at clothing sales or whatever they're calling it these days. We bought three uniforms each in MultiCam and the boots.

"You know how snippy they are about body armor, right? We got two Improved Outer Tactical Vests in MultiCam, too. Everything we have is current issue including the Advanced Combat Helmets with the AN/PVS-14 MNVD."

"I can't picture Joanne in camouflage."

"Add face paint to picture and you couldn't pick out either of us 99% of the time. She humps that Tac-50 as well or better than I can. When we're using a 7.62 caliber sniper rifle, we stick with the Super Matches. When we're using the Tac-50s, we carry the HK417s. We don't use the HK416s a lot because neither of us cares for the cartridge. Although they do belong in our arsenal because the 5.56 is still the primary cartridge of the United States Military."

"Both Joanne and you throw around money like US Treasury is your personal checking account. I've often wondered about that so I'm going just flat out ask. How do you do it?"

"I was frugal and had a lot set aside. However, it doesn't really account for our combined wealth. That would be up to Joanne to explain if she so chose."

"Joanne. I've been curious too," Marion responded to my statement.

"I was more frugal than David. He saved 20% of his military take home pay and I saved 30% of my higher teacher's salary. But it wasn't so much the saving as what was done with the savings. From 1977 to 1983, I bought Krugerrands and stored them in a Swiss lockbox. Beginning in 1983, I got a pool account with a Canadian upstart, Kitco. I also set up several Limited Liability Corporations with myself as the sole employee. Through multiple manipulations, my IRAs eventually held gold as their only asset.

"If you remember, for a brief period gold was around \$700 an ounce and soon settled to between \$300 and \$400 an ounce. I unloaded around \$700 an ounce. When the US Mint began producing the US Gold Eagles, I converted my Canadian gold to one ounce Eagles and kept buying. I used a Trust Company in Little Rock to hold the gold. When David and I got married on 9/11/01, I had several hundred thousand dollars' worth of gold Eagles. In 2001, the price of gold was very low in value, just above \$250 an ounce.

"But precious metals are a long term investment and I just hung on. Today, gold is worth nearly ten times the value it had in 2001. I also picked up some along the way when my mother died and continued to contribute to my IRAs until I resigned my job. What the governments of Arkansas and US didn't know couldn't hurt me. Their holdings were modest compared to mine, but every little bit helps. When I became 59½ years old I pulled the gold."

“The bottom line is that you’re a millionaire?”

“We both are, individually, but I have a lot more than David.”

“Here David, take your check back, I don’t need charity.”

“It’s not charity Jack. I wouldn’t do that to you without saying so. It’s a straight up personal loan from me to you. I told you I expected to be repaid and I meant it. The only leeway involved in the loan is that I don’t want any interest and you can repay it as you’re able. I do expect to be repaid. If you’re convinced it’s charity, by all means tear up the check and we’ll forget the whole thing.”

“You’re serious aren’t you?”

“Dead serious.”

“Jack, don’t be hasty. We need to get the shelter finished and furnished. I’ll pay him back myself with the one-fifty a week I earn cleaning that house.”

“Oh all right, I’ll keep the check. You can count on me keeping track of where every penny goes.”

“Not for my sake Jack. I don’t care how you divide the money up to finish the shelter. I’ll accept Marion’s payments on your behalf when circumstances allow her to make them. The two of you shouldn’t deplete your LTS or STS of food just to make a payment.”

“And if that’s not enough Jack, I’m worth about ten times what David is worth and believe me; it would a very, very small part of my net worth. Same terms in whatever amount you need to finish and furnish the shelter.”

“You understand how this makes me feel, don’t you? Inadequate doesn’t begin to describe it.”

“Inadequate? You and your associate Paul built a very nice shelter on your own with very little outside help. You’ve invested a great deal of time and labor providing for Marion and yourself. You just need some things that are easier to buy than build. I have no doubt you’d have the shelter completely finished and furnished on your own, eventually.

“You do need to complete it quickly Jack. We had those attacks by Iran and we had the Madrid earthquake last December and this January. I’ve been trying to convince David that bad things happen in threes, but he doesn’t seem to believe me. I don’t know what it will be, but we’re due for one more... something.”

“That’s an old wives tale.”

“So you’ve heard of the theory Marion?”

“I’ve heard of it, Joanne. I’m not sure I believe it.”

“Why take a chance? Anyway, it’s time David and I left for home. See you tomorrow?”

“We’ll be here.”

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“I’d like to drive over to Jonesboro the day after tomorrow and get a look at the damage David. I can only imagine they have the city mostly cleaned up now and are rebuilding. I lived there six years and have many fond memories. After the initial TV coverage, there’s been little follow-up. Would that be ok?”

“Sure, I don’t recall ever being to Jonesboro. I asked Jack if they’d ever acquired the H & K rifles and he said that they hadn’t. How would you feel about my duplicating what we have and giving them the firearms, ammunition and accoutrements as Christmas presents?”

“That’s a good idea. One thing though, I’ve got enough Victoria Secret’s to last a lifetime.”

“Well, I have to get you something! Buying those has become almost a tradition.”

“I’ll tell you what, we’ll go shopping together. I’ll choose silk underwear and hose and you can pay for it.”

“Why do I have the feeling that Victoria Secret’s would be cheaper?”

“Probably because they would be cheaper; but, I have enough jeans and western cut shirts to last a while and you can skip those. Silk is a very durable fiber and they’ll last much longer than the polyester. If you get me started on a basic wardrobe of silk lingerie, I’ll maintain it and expand it.”

“Ok, deal. I suppose we’ll need to go to Little Rock?”

“There will be more choices in a large city. What would you like for Christmas?”

“I’d like for you to be wrong about bad things happening in threes. But, that would be beyond your control. So, how about you get me about a Ruger Super Blackhawk and a matching Marlin 1894 Cowboy rifle?”

“Ammo?”

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“I’d like two hundred forty grain Winchester .44 Remington magnum ammo, 1,000 each of SJHP and SJSP. Same deal; you get me an initial supply and I’ll buy the extra I’d like to have on hand.”

I could see Joanne’s eyes take on a certain light. I had no doubt I’d get the weapons I’d asked for, but I suspected her basic wardrobe of silk lingerie would be larger than she initially planned.

The following day, we delivered all of the supplies and matériel Jack and Marion had stored in our shelter and dropped the trailer. We’d packed an overnight bag and headed for Little Rock later in the day. We got much of the shopping done that evening and the next morning I went to see my friendly class 3 dealer. I duplicated the HK416 and 417 setups we had and picked up some surplus 5.56 and 7.62. Joanne ordered 2 Super Blackhawks 7½” barrels and bought one slightly used 1894 Winchester Legacy in .44 Remington magnum.

When the dealer said he’d have everything in two days, I asked how that could be. He explained that there was a very brisk trade in stolen military firearms and had been for some time. The Firearms Owner Protection Act of 1986 had only served to increase the supply of stolen military arms due to the Hughes Amendment. He asked why I hadn’t questioned him earlier; many of the weapons we had purchased from him didn’t have tax stamps because a stamp wasn’t available.

I wondered how much longer he could manage to stay in business. Of course, the ATF didn’t have a good track record; remember *Project Gunrunner* which included Operations *Fast and Furious*, *Wide Receiver* and *Too Hot to Handle*? The agency and the Attorney General took it on the chin. That doesn’t count *Ruby Ridge* or the *Waco Siege*.

We drove up to Jonesboro, looking for obvious signs of the recent New Madrid Earthquakes along the way. The closer we got to Jonesboro, the more evident the effects of the Earthquake became. Jonesboro had been cleaned up, for the most part, and rebuilding was taking place. We eventually found a motel room out of town some distance and spent about one and one half days with Joanne dragging me from one spot to another. She told me what had been in the location before the Earthquake.

One has to remember that she graduated with her Master’s in 1977 and her description was what was at those locations while she was in college at ASU. I said I’d never been in Jonesboro, and that’s almost true. We’d stopped in Jonesboro to buy the climbing gear, remember? Plus, if you’ve seen one McDonalds, you’ve seen them all. We spent the second night at the same motel.

We returned to Little Rock the next morning to pick up the firearms and ammo and the things the stores had to order in from their warehouses. We spent the night in Little Rock and returned to Flippin the next morning. Jack had taken care of horses while we

were gone on our little trip and had taken the offered gasoline to cover that expense. Joanne and I knew just how long it took to make the trip. He'd essentially made it eight times, the night we'd left, the next 3 days and the morning we returned. We drove straight to Jack and Marion's.

"You refilled your gas tank didn't you?"

"Yes, I did, just as you suggested."

"I don't want an argument from you about this, but I have something to compensate you for your time. Help me get them from the pickup."

"Heckler and Koch?"

"Yes, I got a deal on them by buying two 416s, two 417s, suppressors, extra magazines and two cases of surplus. Be forewarned that the rifles are brand spanking new and hotter than a \$3 pistol after a gunfight. So, be very discreet about having the rifles and the suppressors. None of it is registered on the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record (NFR)."

"What kind of surplus?"

"I got one thousand rounds of Lake City M80 overruns and one thousand rounds of M855A1 overruns."

"Current manufacture?"

"Last year."

"Good enough thank you. You said no argument so I'm going to honor that request even if I don't believe you. Are we missing anything like maybe an Abrams or a Bradley?"

"Probably Jack, but there only the four of us and I know diddly squat about armor. An Abrams has a crew of four and the Bradley a crew of three. Besides, aiming the Abrams cannon is more complicated than aiming a rifle; it's all done with electronics."

"Relax David, I wasn't serious."

"You were Logistics and I was Infantry. We have every infantry weapon we need and a lot of ammo. If you can keep the supplies of ammo flowing, should something come up, we can handle most anything we may have to deal with."

"Still thinking that there's going to be a third event?"

"I not saying it must happen, but Joanne is convinced. Since Marion and you are close to completing your shelter and furnishing it, it shouldn't make much difference either way."

"I read that story you mentioned, *3 Time Jinx*. It got me to wondering about some things and I read some that other guy's stories, you know TOM."

"And, what did you think?"

"Do you mean besides we have similar tastes in firearms? He seems to have one track mind about WW III."

"That dates back to the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was stationed at Edwards AFB at the time and those SAC B-47 bombers really got to him. SAC dispersed their nuclear bombers to multiple bases in a defensive measure."

"We've avoided it so far and the Cold War is over, what's he worried about?"

"You'd have to read another of his stories *The Cold War*. He claims it never ended, just changed character."

"I don't know if I buy that, especially in light of what the Israelis and we did to Iran. The word is that not all 20 B-2s flew to Guam. They flew 14 to Guam and 6 to Kadena AFB on Okinawa."

"That doesn't make a lot of sense, Guam only has facilities for 4 B-2s and Kadena doesn't have any B-2 facilities. Why do you suppose they did that?"

"Kim Jong-un seems to be engaged in a power struggle with his Uncle, Jang Song-thaek and the military. It's been ongoing since Kim Jong-il died in December of 2011. My best guess, David, is that should the north move on the south and or Japan, the US will attack the North's outdated Industrial base. The north has vast quantities of raw materials."

"I did a tour over there Jack. That war never ended, they just declared a cease fire that has been in effect for over 60 years. We know that the north has some nukes but do they have a reliable missile to deliver them? They've never had a successful launch of the Taepodong-2 that I'm aware of. However, they have a large number of Hwasong-5 and -6, an improved Scud. Those would put the south and Japan in a world of hurts."

"Both countries are allies and should the north attack either, we're going be drawn right back into a conflict with North Korea, depending on how things work out between Kim Jong-un and Jang Song-thaek."

"I understand what you're saying David; do you really believe it will happen?"

“I’d give it a 50-50 chance; it either will or it won’t. The thing that really concerns me is China, North Korea’s number one ally. China has a large standing Army, Air Force and growing Navy. They’ve based ships in the Indian Ocean, *to protect China’s interests*, is the way I think they phrased it. China has ICBMs that work and a significant number of nuclear weapons. Nobody knows for sure just how many weapons China has, although reports claim that they don’t have a lot of ICBMs.”

“I don’t know about that David. Between Sinodefense dot com and Wiki I understand that China has 20 of the D5A, 24 D31A, 20 of the D31, and 10 of the D4. That’s 74 missiles and some could be MIRV’d. Add to that 24 JL2 and 12 JL1 SLBMs and you have a total of 110 delivery vehicles. That doesn’t count their IRBMs, MRBMs or their SRBMs. They have over 400 weapons that we know of. According to the Department of Defense 2010 report to Congress, their total missile count of all types is between 1395 and 1829.

“Admittedly, they don’t have much of a bomber fleet. The last I heard was in the vicinity of 120 Tu-16s that they licensed and built. They’re designated the H6 heavy bomber. And, we’re assuming that China would back North Korea.”

“They do have an Aircraft Carrier now, the *Varyag*. The word on the street is that they finished it up in late 2011 or early 2012 and ran two sets of sea trials. China tried to develop that J-15 carrier based fighter because Russia wouldn’t sell them the Su-33 Flanker D. Russia claims that the J-15 won’t meet China’s needs. A retired Russian General said that China would end up buying 50 of the Su-33s.

“I suspect they already bought the multirole Su-33s from Russia. That said I don’t have a clue whether the aircraft have been delivered. The plane is equivalent to the F/A-18 Super Hornet or the F-14 Tomcat. If they have them, it would be a leap forward in their naval aviation program.”

Was it reasonable to presume that the turmoil in North Korea resulting from the death of Kim Jong-il could result in a resumption of the war from sixty odd years before? Jack and I were simply discussing possibilities and the reasonableness of those possibilities hadn’t entered the discussion to this point.

We could presume that China would side with North Korea, but would they? The People’s Republic of China wasn’t the same country it had been 60 years before under Mao. They had reached the status of industrial giant due to cheap labor, significant raw materials and a ready market.

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North Korea was known for its secrecy. Nearly everything was done behind closed doors and only when they wanted to make a point did they go public. Thus the power struggle was occurring behind those same closed doors. Kim Jong-un was getting a life lesson in a hurried way. He’d gone from being a civilian to a four star General. His father hadn’t had the time necessary to build his son’s power base.

As he pushed to consolidate his power, Jang Song-thaek worked behind similar closed doors establishing a separate power base. China was taking a wait and see posture, making nice with each of the two, yet not fully committing to either. The last thing China wanted was a resumption of the Korean War as a full-out open conflict between the north and south.

China feared that should that happen, they would be forced to support their ally of sixty plus years. Sixty years previously, China wasn't a nuclear power and had to fight the Korean War the old fashioned way, a Third Generation war. A future war on the Korean Peninsula would also take the form of a Third Generation war, the division was very obvious and didn't lend itself to a Fourth Generation war, an Insurrection. Perhaps worse, China was a nuclear power with an estimated weapons count from 400 to 1,200. Their shortcoming, if any, was their delivery vehicles, ergo, ICBMs and SLBMs.

China lagged behind the Western powers in so many ways. They didn't have a comparable Navy or Air Force. The People's Liberation Army was 2.3 million strong, divided into the ground forces of 1.6 million, a Navy of 250,000 and an Air Force of 250,000 and the Second Artillery Corps (missile units) of some 120,000. In times of crisis, the PLA Ground Force will be reinforced by numerous reserve and paramilitary units. The PLA reserve component has about 1.2-1.5 million personnel divided into 30 infantry, and 12 anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) divisions. Two amphibious mechanized divisions were also created in Nanjing and Guangzhou MR. At least 40 percent of PLA divisions and brigades were now mechanized or armored, almost double the percentage before the reduction.

In North Korea, people in positions of power capable of supporting one camp or the other simply disappeared. Many of these disappearances were of skilled military personnel. The struggling entities were cutting off their noses to spite their face.

South Korea had been on alert since Kim Jong-il's death two plus years earlier. The United States had slowly increased our standing force in South Korea from less than 30,000 to nearly 50,000. The latest generation tanks, the M1A3 Abrams, had been deployed and improved IFV and CFV were completed well ahead of schedule and also fielded to South Korea.

Two Carrier Strike Groups were maintained in the waters surrounding South Korea, one in the Yellow Sea and a second in the Sea of Japan. The CVN George Washington remained at its base, Yokosuka Naval Base in Yokosuka, Japan. It was ready to set sail with 24 hours' notice. A fourth Carrier Strike Group was assigned to the area surrounding Taiwan and could join the Washington and other two Strike Groups within 42 hours or less.

It had long been the policy of the United States Navy to not carry nuclear weapons aboard the carriers. It was still the policy, but... the replenishment ships now carried the weapons. In addition, the Los Angeles 688I class subs with vertical launch tubes each

carried 12 TLAM-Ns in their VLS and additional TLAMs in their torpedo rooms along with torpedoes.

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Neither China nor the US intended on making a first strike; however, the North Koreans were completely unpredictable. They had ground to ship and air to ship missiles which could possibly carry a nuclear weapon. With nukes, close counted.

December 23, 2011

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea appears to be making an orderly transition after the death of leader Kim Jong-il last week, but the risk of collapse is higher than before and regional powers need to start discussing that contingency with China, diplomats and analysts say.

The problem is China refuses to contemplate any unraveling of North Korea which has nuclear ambitions and is its long-term ally. Beijing has rebuffed such overtures from the United States, Japan and South Korea.

“Secret talks with China to plan for contingencies have long been overdue,” said Douglas Paal, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in a paper this week.

“Beijing has been reluctant to engage in this kind of dialogue, although Chinese thinkers have increasingly acknowledged privately the need for such an authoritative conversation.”

Yet little evidence has emerged that such talks have taken place or are being planned, despite a flurry of discussions between the four countries in the aftermath of Kim’s death last Saturday.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda travels to Beijing at the weekend, but it is unlikely that China would entertain anything more than platitudes. No contingency plan can be coordinated without China’s agreement, since it borders North Korea and supplies much of its food and fuel.

Christopher Hill, a former envoy to the six-party talks on North Korea nuclear disarmament, said it was difficult to raise North Korean instability scenarios with China.

“The Chinese are always skittish about these things,” he said, adding that the disclosure of secret US diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks have made them especially wary of contingency planning.

Still, the transition of power in North Korea from the departed “Dear Leader,” Kim Jong-il, to his son, the “Great Successor” Kim Jong-un, is going smoothly so far.

“We hope it stays that well,” said Pentagon spokesman George Little. “We have not seen any unusual North Korean troop movements since the death of Kim Jong-il. That would be one indicator of a less than smooth transition.”

The real worry is further down the road if a contest for power develops and piles stresses on a state that is already perilously close to economic collapse.

China, the United States and other regional powers around the peninsula may face a number of daunting scenarios if the transition goes badly over the medium term. These could include civil conflict, a mass exodus of refugees, military mutiny, lost control of the North’s small nuclear arsenal or military attack.

China is however undergoing its own leadership transition in 2012 and down the line it’s not impossible that there may be some changes in its steadfast refusal to work with the United States and its allies on contingency planning for North Korea.

In one Feb 22, 2010 cable by then US ambassador to Seoul Kathleen Stephens, a top South Korean diplomat cited private conversations with two high-level Chinese officials who said China could live with a reunified Korea under the control of South Korea.

The then South Korean vice foreign minister, Chun Yung-woo, who was also a delegate at the six-party talks, said the two Chinese officials told him privately that China “would clearly not welcome any US military presence north of the Demilitarized Zone in the event of a collapse.”

But the Chinese officials told him Beijing “would be comfortable with a reunified Korea controlled by Seoul and anchored to the United States in a ‘benign alliance’ - as long as Korea was not hostile towards China.”

The United States maintains 28,500 troops in South Korea and remains the Supreme Commander of unified American and South Korean troops in the event of a crisis with the North.

Chun, now the South Korean president’s national security adviser, did not respond to a request for comment.

Chun also told the US ambassador in that cable that China would not militarily intervene in the event of a North Korea collapse, and he expected that to happen within two to three years after the death of Kim Jong-il.

The alleged remarks from the two Chinese diplomats do not represent China’s official position on North Korea. But China’s ability to influence North Korea is sometimes over-estimated. In April 2009, He Yafei, then China’s vice foreign minister, told a US diplomat in Beijing that North Korea acted like a “spoiled child” to attract US attention through steps such as firing a three-stage rocket over Japan.

The official line from Beijing, repeated during a visit by Kim Jong-il to China in May, is that the relationship remains “sealed in blood” of the allies that fought together in the Korean War.

“For China, the core imperative remains the avoidance of anything that might compromise North Korea's stability,” said Sarah McDowall, an analyst at IHS Jane's.

“Occasionally, however, when North Korea commits particularly blatant provocations, this priority comes into conflict with another of China's over-riding diplomatic objectives - its desire to be seen as a responsible global player. China's behavior with regards to North Korea in recent years has been a struggle to balance these two objectives.”

In another WikiLeaks cable from Astana, Kazakhstan on June 8, 2009, Chinese ambassador Cheng Guoping told his US counterpart Richard Hoagland that China opposes North Korea's nuclear tests and hopes for peaceful reunification of the peninsula over the long term.

Cheng said China's objectives in North Korea were to ensure their commitments on non-proliferation, maintain stability, and ‘don't drive (Kim Jong-il) mad,’” Hoagland said in the cable.

John Park, at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, used a medical analogy to describe the difference in the US and Chinese approaches.

“The way contingency planning is framed by the US is, ‘Let us coordinate so that if the North Korean state does collapse we can harvest the organs, and we think they should be implanted in a unified Korea, and the more the US and China coordinate on this, the more smooth and stable it will be.’

“Whereas China's view is, ‘Why would you wait until the patient dies? Why wouldn't you prevent the death of the regime?’ So there the Chinese are adopting almost this preventive medicine approach.”

Jia Qingguo, professor of international relations at Peking University, said prospects for political stability in North Korea were bleak and interested powers needed “to step up communications, especially now the risks of a crisis are quite high.”

The loyalty of those around the “Great Successor” is difficult to ascertain, Jia said.

“Add to that all the many problems, domestic and external, confronting North Korea. In these circumstances, I think it's very difficult to say whether Kim Jong-un will be able to master the political apparatus.”

Kim Jong-un, who is in his late 20s, has little experience. His father Kim Jong-il had 20 years to prepare for rule under the tutelage of his father, Kim Il-sung, the charismatic founding father of the North Korean state.

Analysts have said senior officers were replaced after young Kim was made a four-star general last year, though he had never served in the military.

Issues that need to be urgently addressed in contingency planning include how to provide aid in the face of a collapse or crisis, and how to ensure the safety of the North's nuclear materials, Jia said.

"I think from the viewpoint of China and the United States, it may be up to one of them to assume control of the nuclear weapons and avoid proliferation."

A former Japanese diplomat who dealt with North Korean issues, Hitoshi Tanaka, questioned whether any measures would be effective in the event of "internal domestic turmoil" in North Korea.

South Korea, China, Japan and the United States "are very busy collecting and exchanging information and comparing notes" about North Korea's future, but that information is "very, very limited."

"It is extremely important...to let China work in the most constructive way, because clearly, China is the last resort in the context of helping North Korea," he said.

And, you think I make this stuff up from thin air...

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Well aware of Kim Jong-il's health issues, both the US and China had prepared for the day when it happened. The US developed a SIOF to deal with the circumstances when they occurred with nothing taken for granted. It took the US very little time to implement the SIOF. Four Carrier Strike Groups were moved to the western Pacific, after the weapons had been secured aboard the subs and replenishment ships. Two to Korea and two to Taiwan.

China watched the actions of the United States and activated half of their reserve forces with the other half on standby. When the face-off between the powers in North Korea began to drag on, the standby reserves were returned to their previous status and the activated reserves were reduced to standby status. During the same time frame, China offered Russia the full asking price for 50 Su-33s, with a bonus for early delivery. Putin needed the money and the Su-33s under construction were delivered to China and Sukhoi rushed to fill the order for the remaining planes.

Even at their fastest pace the Su-33s would take time to construct and be flight tested. In the interim the US continued to surround South Korea and China ramped up completion of several auxiliary naval vessels, maintaining the status quo. Carrier Strike Groups had been transferred from the Atlantic around Cape Horn, bringing the number of Carriers assigned to the Pacific Fleet to eight. The Ford had been completed ahead of

schedule and completed her sea trials. Along with the Abraham Lincoln, the Gerald R. Ford was transferred to the Pacific, leaving four Strike Groups to cover the Atlantic and Med.

Additional US submarines were moved to the west Pacific to support the 688I class boats, the Seawolf to the Sea of Japan, the Jimmy Carter to the southern tip of South Korea and the Connecticut to the Yellow Sea. Four Block 1 Virginia class and 6 Block 2 Virginia class subs were also moved to the west Pacific with two being stationed with the Washington in Yokosuka and the other two evenly divided between the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan.

The Virginia class had mixed loads of Tomahawks, 6 TLAM-Ns and 6 TLAMs with remaining space occupied with Mk-48 ADCAP torpedoes. The Seawolf class subs were equipped with a mixture of torpedoes, TLAMs and Harpoon anti-ship missiles. The Carter carried a full complement of SEALs. Stationed as she was in the Cheju Strait, the Carter could respond to either Korean coast in a matter of hours.

All of the 688I, Seawolf and Virginia class subs could resupply with an unrep or return to Yokosuka for a crew swap and/or repairs. Not surprisingly the US forgot to inform the Japanese that the Strike Groups and submarines carried nuclear weapons. The Carriers didn't have any nukes, per se, although they were available on short notice.

At any given time, six of the eight Carrier Strike Groups were station keeping around the Korean Peninsula. While the Carriers didn't do full crew swaps, crew being transferred to or from a Carrier generally travel by C-2 Greyhound aircraft. The submarines, on the other hand, swapped crews at 90 day intervals.

No Ohio class SSBNs were in the general area and the two SSGNs in the area were fully armed with conventional cruise missiles and Mk-48 ADCAPs. With everything in place, the US and South Korea waited for North Korea's next move. China, meanwhile, was producing additional DF-31As at an unprecedented pace.

US estimates of the number of DF-31As notwithstanding, the dummy silos the Chinese had built to protect earlier missiles were being completed under the cover of darkness with little, if any, activity occurring during daylight hours. The question then became, would our satellites detect the activities? And, if they did, would they tumble to the fact that it was a construction project rather than a maintenance project.

China could hope to build sufficient missiles to overcome either the American or Russian Strategic advantage of ~1,700 weapons each. Their greatest advantage came at the relative simplicity of the solid fueled missiles. The hardest part, constructing the solid fuel stages, was no great chore. Installing the guidance systems took longer than building the rocket motors and installing the warheads.

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It was speculated that the range of the DF-31A model was on the order of 7,000-7,500 miles, that the missile warhead could be MIRV'd and might contain decoys together with 3 150kT warheads.

◦

“How much longer do we have to wait David?”

“We only have to wait until North Korea does something Jack.”

“I’m not so worried about North Korea; What I’m really afraid of is China getting involved like they did last time.”

“I know and there’s no way to predict how that will play out.”

◦

REPORTING FROM SEOUL – Pyongyang’s seat of power is the Kremlin of the post-Cold War era. Its often mischievous doings conducted behind closed doors, leaving the outside world to mere guess and conjecture.

That’s no small feat in a time of drones, satellite spying, sophisticated surveillance and with the planet’s most wired nation, South Korea, sitting right at its doorstep.

In the aftermath of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il’s death, regime-watchers are left to grasp at clues about the machinations of change as Kim’s hand-picked successor and youngest son, Kim Jong-un, shores up his support among the military and begins the Kim family’s third generation of power.

On Sunday, North Korean state-run television aired footage of the insider who is expected to guide the youngest Kim in the first and most fragile period of his reign. Jang Song-Thaek, Kim Jong-un’s uncle and husband of the late dictator’s sister, Kim Kyong-Hui, was shown wearing a military uniform with a general’s insignia, hinting at what many assume to be his emerging role as a go-between with the nation’s powerful military generals.

The solemn-faced Jang was paying his respects to Kim Jong Il, whose body lies in state at Pyongyang’s Kumsusan Memorial Palace prior to a lavish government funeral on Wednesday.

The appearance marks the first time that Jang, usually dressed in business suits, was seen in public in military uniform, according to officials from Seoul’s Unification Ministry.

As internal leadership developments progressed in Pyongyang, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda arrived in Beijing on Sunday to hold talks with top Chinese officials on how to ensure stability in North Korea during the leadership change.

“I would like to exchange views and information in detail so as to avert a harmful effect on peace and stability on the Korean peninsula,” Noda told reporters before leaving Tokyo.

On the gray, nearly deserted streets of Pyongyang, there have been other subtle signs of a new era of leadership. State media has encouraged citizens to begin referring to Kim Jong-un with the new title of “supreme leader of the revolutionary armed forces” as he has begun making appearances out of the shadow of his late father.

With neither the US nor South Korea having an embassy in North Korea, experts are left to speculate on the makeup of Pyongyang’s new inner-circle of power, but Jang and his wife are most certain to become critical players in both the short and long-run, many say.

Kim Kyong-Hui is already a high-ranking Workers’ Party official and Jang is a vice chairman of the powerful national Defense Commission. South Korean intelligence experts predict that new key posts will soon become bestowed on the pair.

Both are 65, more than twice the age of the new North Korean leader, who many suspect is 28. In a Confucian culture where age demands respect, many say the two will lend credibility to the young Kim, who looks boyish in his closely-shorn haircut.

Within the North Korean leadership, titles – many sounding almost cartoonish in their loftiness and scope – are singular clues to a political player’s rising importance.

Kim Il-Sung, who founded the nation in 1948 and died in 1994, retains the title of “eternal president.” His son, Kim Jong-il, wore many titles, including “Chairman of the National Defense Commission,” “Supreme Commander of the Korean People’s Army” and “General Secretary of the Workers’ Party.”

Shortly after he was named to succeed his father last year, Kim Jong-un was promoted to four-star general and named a “vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers’ Party.”

In viewing his father’s body, Kim has been accompanied by top members of North Korea’s military leadership, another sign that generals, at least for now, are embracing the new ruler.

State-run media has also made historical references to the youngest Kim’s rise, pointing out Saturday that his rise to “supreme commander” comes on the 20th anniversary of his father’s appointment to the same post.

The state-controlled newspaper Rodong Sinmun urged Kim to accept the military post. "Comrade Kim Jong-un, please assume the supreme commandership, as wished by the people," it said.

The Korean Central News Agency has also reported that the nation's military has pledged its support of Kim.

"Let the whole army remain true to the leadership of Kim Jong-un over the army," the news service said in its report.

© 12/25/11, LA Times... God gave me 2 eyes and the Dr. fixed them so I could read...

Did I say simple with regard to solid fueled missiles? I'm quite sure the Russians didn't agree. Their new missile, the modified Topol-M called the Bulava had 7 test failures out of the first 19 tests. The US hadn't had a matching failure rate since the Vanguard missile program. Nonetheless, Russia overcame the problems with the Bulava. The Borei class had been modified (block II) to carry 20 missiles. Russia has 3 Borei Is commissioned, 2 Borei IIs commissioned and 3 more Borei IIs under construction, one ready for sea trials.

It was for all practical purposes a waiting game with much of the world holding their breaths. It was very reminiscent of the Cold War where several nations were poised with their fingers on the triggers. With Iran out of the picture, all eyes were focused on North Korea and China. Only China had a no first use policy, like the US and Russia.

In Arkansas and Missouri the four of us had never been more prepared, running with the theme *it's not if, it's when and what*. All we could do was grow older and wait for Joanne's third event.

We didn't have to wait long, only a year. It started with a resumption of the India – Pakistan clash over the Kashmir. The ground conflict escalated and India began to kick Pakistani butt. The conflict spilled over into Aksai Chin, the Chinese controlled segment of the Kashmir. When China entered the conflict to protect its territories, Pakistan went nuclear, attacking India and Aksai Chin.

India only responded to the attack on its territory in a one for one exchange. But, as Caesar once said, *The Die was Cast*. China attacked Pakistan, laying ruin to the country. India remained on full alert in case China attacked them. It didn't happen; instead, Kim Jong-un took advantage of troubles elsewhere in the world and crossed the DMZ into South Korea. Jang Song-thaek was caught between a rock and a hard spot and supported Jong-un's action.

The Washington sailed from Yokosuka and the Reagan departed the Taiwan area, leaving the Bush as the only carrier strike group near Taiwan. The North Koreans had acquired a dozen of the C-802A, 180km range anti-ship missiles from the Chinese. The plan was to wait for all four strike groups to be in range of the ground based missiles

and launch 3 at each carrier. The C-802A is a difficult missile to avoid due to its sea skimming approach 3-5 meters above the surface of the water.

Each strike group boasted 3 CGs (Ticonderoga class guided missile cruisers) and 5 DDGs (Burke class guided missile destroyers). They usually had 1 or 2 cruisers and up to 3 destroyers. CSGs are not restricted to a specific composition and can be modified depending on expected threats, roles, or missions expected during a deployment, and one may be different from another. The Navy states that *there really is no real definition of a strike group. Strike groups are formed and disestablished on an as needed basis, and one may be different from another. However, they all are comprised of similar types of ships.*

In this case, the full destroyer squadrons were escorting the Carriers and extra Cruisers had been pulled and redeployed to the Far East. It was well that the Navy thought ahead, when the Strike Groups were within range, Kim Jong-un gave the launch order. The Aegis Combat System is controlled by an advanced, automatic detect-and-track, multi-function three-dimensional passive electronically scanned array radar, the AN/SPY-1. Known as *the Shield of the Fleet*, the SPY high-powered (6 megawatt) radar is able to perform search, tracking, and missile guidance functions simultaneously with a track capacity of well over 100 targets at more than 100 nautical miles (190 km). However the AN/SPY-1 Radar is mounted lower than the AN/SPS-49 radar system and so has a reduced radar horizon.

Nonetheless, the Aegis systems picked up the 12 missiles and activated the semi-automated defenses. None of the C-802A missiles struck a single US ship. US naval vessels have multiple, redundant defense suites, beginning with their Standard missiles followed by the Rim-116 RAM, the SeaRAM and last but not least the CIWS. All US naval vessels are equipped with the CIWS, and most are equipped with the Rim-116 RAM. Only recently have ships been equipped with the SeaRAM, an in-between weapon.

Utilizing the armament of the RIM-116 Rolling Airframe Missile, and based on the mounting and targeting systems of the Phalanx, SeaRAM was developed in response to concerns about the performance of gun-based systems against modern, super-sonic sea-skimming anti-ship missiles. Designed as a companion self-defense system to Phalanx, the SeaRAM is equipped with an 11 cell RAM launcher, and provides defense at a longer range. Due to the common mounting, SeaRAM inherits the relatively easy installation characteristics of its gun-based sibling, with Raytheon stating that *SeaRAM fits the exact shipboard installation footprint of the Phalanx, uses the same power and requires minimal shipboard modification.*

However, the response to the attack against the four strike groups had to be seen to be believed. The DDGs and CGs then launched their conventional Tomahawks while the Carriers made ready to launch the full combat air wings. The F-35C hadn't been deployed for this mission and it was all Super Hornets, over 200 of them.

The 20 B-2s and all of the retired F-117 Nighthawks were stationed at Kadena and they got their turn bombing North Korea before the fighter aircraft began their runs. It rather reminded me of the opening night of Operation Desert Storm. When the sun rose the following morning, North Korea lay in ruins. Between the Tomahawk missiles and the JDAMs, most of the country was a pile of rubble. It served to end the North Korean invasion with not one nuke being used.

That was the primary consideration, after all, no use of nuclear weapons. China had the no first use policy, did they not? Yes they did, but Pakistan had made the first use, making China weapons free. While we watched the limited news sent back by embedded reporters, not including Gerardo (one-fingered salute) who had been permanently banned, the Chinese were preparing their response to the Pakistani attack.

They first eliminated India from their plans since India had been careful not to fire on China. Pakistan could be dealt with using IRBMs and MRBMs depending on where they were fired from. China had spent most of the night erecting and fueling their ICBMs and concluded that they might be able to get by with a first strike. Getting by with a first strike was what led to the doctrine of MAD so many years before. Russia couldn't attack the US and vice versa because each country could respond before the incoming missiles hit.

The MAD doctrine applied equally to China, the UK and France, to name a few other countries. As soon as the missile tracks were confirmed, the President opened the football and released the codes. Like it or not, the President didn't have a choice, the people demanded it. When the red phone rang indicating it was the General in charge of Cheyenne Mountain, the Chief of Staff answered the phone and handed it to the President. The President then walked out to the control room and had the officer open the football. He gave the codes to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs who verified them and leaned over and to the General in charge of the National Military Command Center and said, "You heard the man; a full response against China only."

"I have missiles lifting off from Russia."

"Targets?"

"Wait one. Ah, China."

"No response."

"Wait, they're more. They're sea launches."

"Targets?"

"Us."

"Mr. President?"

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“What? Oh, the missiles. Let me get that card. Here you go, you have my authority. Mr. Secretary?”

“Yeah, do it. And, transfer the Coast Guard. Mr. President?”

“I concur.”

o

We got about 15 minutes warning in round numbers. I hate you TOM! Who ever heard of a stupid thing called the Rule of Threes? It's all your fault, your number 3 event is usually a GTW, or sometimes Yellowstone.

With the launch of the missiles, the US was officially at war with China and Russia. In turn that meant that Sean and Colin were now Navy officers. Both were Lt. JGs, and served on National Security Cutters, Sean on USCGC Bertholf (WMSL-750) and Colin on USCGC Stratton (WMSL-752). The Legend Class Cutters are the second largest of all Coast Guard Cutters behind the Healy class (Ice Breaker) and are replacing the Hamilton Class Cutters.

Jack and Marion were in their completed shelter in Missouri and we moved to our shelter after tending to the horses. We saw the results of some of the warheads, there was one to north, probably Whiteman or maybe Springfield, and one to south, probably Little Rock and more to the west, Oklahoma City, Tulsa or Wichita. Those would bring the most radiation.

I said we had a year between events didn't I? We were busy during that year. Joanne replaced the barn with a monolithic dome with a radius of 40' It provided ample storage room for the hay, straw and COB. She had it covered in six feet of earth although the concrete was 1 foot thick. It gave a protection factor of 72,000+, conservatively, she claimed. She had it connected to our shelter with a pedestrian arch that she'd read about in one or more of the fiction stories.

My initial thought was that it was a foolish waste of money, but I changed my mind the first time after the war started that we had to tend to the horses. Given the shape of the dome, the soil thickness near the bottom exceed six feet, being more like 12 feet but the top was a measured six feet and topped with bituminous and six foot wall with a parapet with merlons and crenels. It looked like a medieval castle, at least the top did. Access was via ramp which passed through the concrete lining and had a blast door from Oregon. The ramp continued until one was standing on the blacktop covering. I noticed that it wasn't completely flat and there were drain holes every so often to let moisture drain.

About that time, I was thinking, "What the hell, we have everything else, why not a castle on the southern shores of Bull Shoals Lake?"

o

Marion had managed to give us 52 paychecks of \$150 each, reducing the balance from \$15,000 to \$7,200. Jack had easily managed the other \$7,200, working like a man driven with a persistent need not to owe me a dime. And then, he tried to insult us by paying for the H & K firearms.

"How much were they, I have the money."

"I don't remember Jack. I told you they were to compensate you for tending to the horses. Those are expensive horses and if even one got sick and was left unattended, we'd be out more than the rifles cost."

"I don't believe you, how much."

"Do you remember you said, 'You understand how this makes me feel, don't you? Inadequate doesn't begin to describe it.'"

"I remember; that's when you wrote the check for fifteen grand."

"And, you've paid back every penny, haven't you?"

"Marion paid most of it; how much for the rifles, suppressors, magazines and ammo?"

"Nothing, they're all stolen military property and I wouldn't want to be accused of selling stolen military property. Why do you resent how much Joanne and I managed to accumulate? We went without for years just to get to the place we are now. Twenty-eight years was a long time to wait to get married, you know. We did without our own family although that wasn't really by choice."

"You raised two fine young men."

"We did; but Jack, they were foster children, not our own. Although under the circumstances we obviously wouldn't have had children of our own regardless."

"Back to the matter at hand, how much?"

"How much do you have?"

"Four thousand."

"That means you have thirty-six hundred?"

“Of course. What does that have to do with it?”

“That’s what I paid,” I said, thinking, for one weapon system.

“Including the ammo?”

“That was extra. Give me the four grand and we’ll be even.”

“Ok, here. What’s your take on the Kashmir?”

“I don’t trust the Pakistanis not to go nuclear if it heats up too much. If a nuclear war breaks out there and involves China, it could be Katie bar the door.”

“How’s the dome coming?”

“They’re just finishing up. It just doesn’t make sense spending a million dollars to protect \$72,000 worth of horse flesh.”

“Is that what it’s costing?”

“By the time you figure in the pedestrian arch from the barn to the shelter, air purification from Israel, the blacktop, the blast doors and the parapet, it is close to a million, give or take.”

“I’ll bet you wish you had some crew served weapons about now.”

o

“It sure isn’t like what I imagined.”

“What did you imagine?”

“I don’t know; a crowd of people, for sure.”

“We kept it low profile to avoid a crowd of people. Then Paul got Jack to build that shelter and we lost half our expected population. By the way, if the subject of those H & K firearms ever comes up, deny you know anything about what we paid for them. Ok?”

“Why?”

“After Jack paid off the shelter loan, he got in my face about the H & K firearms insisting he repay us. When I couldn’t talk him out of it, I asked how much cash he had. He had four thousand so I set the price at \$900 per, \$3,600. He asked if that included the ammo and I told him no, but \$4,000 would cover in total.”

“But...”

“But what?”

“That’s all we had in them.”

“I know. The civilian model runs about \$3,500 so people naturally assume the military models cost that much rather than the \$550 they sell to the government for, plus extras. Obama really got a bargain when he decided to go with the HK416 and 417s.”

“Plus they can use the existing magazines.”

“The 416s do.”

o

The President’s announcement that the US was reducing the size of the military had backfired. Obviously he had never read Marine FMFM-1 wherein lay *Operation David*. Some of his strategy worked for a while. Until Kim Jong-un took power and contention arose within the ranks of the North Koreans. So did the fighting in the Kashmir occur because Pakistan thought the world’s attention was diverted to North Korea? If so, why had Kim Jong-un used the nuclear exchange over the Kashmir to cover his invasion of the south? The US was expecting something from Kim Jong-un and had five carrier strike groups in the Far East. They weren’t expecting what happened in the Kashmir.

Why then did we end up with a GTW? We had acted appropriately in every case, expending only JP-5 in the operation over Iran and didn’t get caught when we retaliated against them for them bombing the United States. We only used conventional munitions against North Korea. It was a lot of munitions, but still... no nukes were used. It boiled down to the worst fears of the West being realized, China attacked the US and Russian Borei class submarines subsequently attacked the US.

It would be brought out that the attack against the US was a mistake. The computer that was supposed to reprogram the missiles to the new coordinates in China failed to do so and the missiles flew against their preprogrammed targets. Allow me two questions, please. One, why were US targets preprogrammed into the missile guidance systems? And, two, how had the same computer on all five submarines made the same error?

The answer to the first question was that the US had *always been the enemy* and the answer to the second was fundamental, a *programming error*. The computers were identical and used the same software which worked in practice but had failed in a real world scenario. It’s always in the details, you know?

We had shoveled off the blacktop roof of the dome to permit us to see beyond the snow that was about 9 feet deep. We were running on coal to keep the house warm now that we were out of the shelter. I made sure the chimneys were clear before anything was

fired up but the propane furnace had been running while we were in the shelter so I know that chimney and the one for the hot water heater were clear.

Jack and Marion were in similar straits, except they had 10 feet of snow on the Missouri side. He said the snow was about even with the deck on the roof of their shelter. In case you get us confused, he has the shelter on the north side of Bull Shoals Lake and our castle is on the south side of Bull Shoals Lake. They're at Pontiac on the east side of the north finger and we're just north of Flippin on the east side of the south finger. Look at a map, you'll figure it out.

Jack and Marion had a 6 month supply of STS and a 1 year supply for two of LTS. We, on the other hand, probably wouldn't get it all eaten before some of it spoiled. Yeah, we'd given them a freezer but I don't know if Jack ever went to the locker plant in Mountain Home or not and I wasn't about to ask. They were located about 100 miles from Springfield and about 25 miles from Mountain Home so he could have gone either place. I knew Mountain Home was closer and that's why I recommended that locker plant.

We used the Meat Shop in Mountain Home, but there was also Twin Lakes Smoke House/Meat Pack in Gassville and two locker plants in Harrison. All of the places I listed are classified as meat packing plants. I don't really know, but I'd guess they all charged about the same price to cut up a side of beef of butcher and cut up a hog and smoke the bacon and ham. I know that they charged extra to brine and smoke the loins.

Gordon Lightfoot - Lorne Michaels - Sarah McLachlean - Leslie Nielson - Neil Young - Barenakedladies - Pamela Anderson - Dr. Fredrick Banting - Leonard Cohen - Paul Anka - Margaret Atwood - Alexander Graham Bell - Robert Goulet - Howie Mandel - Celine Dion - Steppenwolf - Shania Twain - Lorne Greene - Norman Jewison - Michael Ironside - Bret "The Hitman" Hart - Donald Sutherland - William Shatner - Fay Wray - The Tragically Hip - Dave Thomas - Alex Trebek - Bobby Orr - Keanu Reeves - Martin Short - Phil Hartman - Al Waxman - Alan Thicke - Yvonne Decarlo - Michael J. Fox - Jim Carrey - Dan Aykroyd - Raymond Burr - Monty Hall - Paul Shaffer - Kiefer Sutherland - Blue Rodeo - John Candy - Samuel Goldwyn (MGM) - Bruce Cockburn - Paul Gross - Wayne Gretzky - Douglas Coupland - Jim Cameron

I have a question, what do the people listed have in common?

You figure it out right? I knew Dave Thomas was a dead giveaway. He doesn't belong on the list. He was 100% pure US American. Most of the rest are Canadians or have some contact with Canada, both the living and the dead. Well, hell, no one can live forever, can they? That said, we're not in any rush, the snow is melting, slowly. A couple more months and we'll see the firewood and coal piles and be able to resupply the basement. And, if we can't, we do have one heck of a bunch of propane.

Meanwhile, if anyone shows up and wants what we have, we have on the order of 50,000 reasons why they can't have it. There're just some things you can't have too

much of and that doesn't mean only toilet paper. Earl Grey and Folgers come to mind. We have enough cigarettes I could probably take up smoking if I wanted to and never run out.

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 41

You do remember the Winchester and Pair of Super Blackhawks Joanne bought me in Little Rock? It was sort of like eating peanuts, every time I shot up a couple of boxes of ammo, I restocked with a case. That's a story in itself. The .44 Remington magnum had a long run as the most powerful handgun cartridge, remember Dirty Harry and his S & W model 29? S & W couldn't produce them fast enough for a while. But nothing lasts and there were several more powerful cartridges brought out.

Even though that Super Blackhawk was a heavy handgun, I strained to maintain a grip and finally changed to a Pachmayr RSB-G/D Gripper Decelerator for both revolvers. I could handle the recoil after that. The ammunition was Remington 240gr SJSP and SJHP, bought in case lots. Aside from the product numbers and bullets, the two loading were identical in every detail. These came 50 cartridges to the box and ten boxes to the case and I was very happy we had as much money as we did. Of course all of this came well before the war and I had somehow managed to overbuy the .44 Remington magnum ammo and ended up with ten cases of each just before the war occurred. I'd say my bad, but it was only money and we weren't short on that, thank God. Make it 60,000 reasons to leave us alone.

The only real problem now was which firearm to take where and under what circumstances. What did we really need; diesel for the pickups, gasoline for the chainsaws, more generator oil and filters, eventually and the same with propane, more eventually. At the moment nothing worth trying to push our way through the snow.

The snow was a double edge sword. It kept us trapped at home but kept others away from our home. Jack said they were in the same condition and there were few houses in and around Pontiac. They didn't have as much propane stored as we did but their generator used slightly less. He was in the firewood business and had what he planned to sell stored so they had enough firewood, even if all they had was a fireplace for heat and a wood burning kitchen stove that I talked him into buying. Between the two, they were *mostly warm*.

"Jack, as soon as the roads clear enough for you to get out and about, hook your trailer to your pickup and the log splitter behind the trailer and boogie on down here. We have enough food for years and four people in one place make a better defense force than two in two widely spaced locations."

"We might just do that."

"Just lock up that shelter of yours and don't worry about someone breaking in. If they do, they do and would probably have done the same if the two of you were there."

"They hit Phoenix, you know."

"No, I didn't know; have you heard from Jason?"

“Yeah, he was home when it went down and we eventually got a radio call on a pre-designated frequency on the 40 meter band. Have you heard from your two?”

“No, but no news is good news. We’re fairly sure the DOD and President attached them to the Navy. It is wartime and they should make rank quickly. The Legend class cutter is nearly as big as an Oliver Hazard Perry class frigate and they have a wider beam. My best guess would be that the Navy would use them to fulfill the Littoral role.”

“At the rate the snow is melting it could be two months before we can make it down there.”

“It’s melting faster here so it might be sooner Jack. Let me know when you’re ready to try it and I’ll check out the road to Mountain Home.”

“Is there timber I can cut down in your area?”

“More than you can cut in your lifetime Jack. We can go partners with you cutting and hauling and me splitting and stacking. We might get a tractor and a log skid to pull the whole logs up to our house and our wives can deliver the retail firewood.”

“Maybe, maybe not; I’ll have to talk that over with Marion.”

“Me too, I’ll have to talk it over with Joanne.”

“How are you on hardwoods down there?”

“We have a lot of white oak. And before you ask, you can’t cut any black walnut trees unless I get an offer I can’t refuse. I’m not certain but I think it should be sold to veneer companies or companies specializing in gun stocks. I was thinking seventy-five grand and up.”

“But there’s no market for wood like that at the moment.”

“Yeah, I know and that’s why I said not to cut the black walnut; it can only appreciate in value. You can probably get \$250 a cord and up for cured white oak. Our area wasn’t hit too badly with fallout. We got a little from southern Kansas or Oklahoma. I saw a detonation to the north and one to the south. I figure the one to the south was Little Rock. Do you have any idea where the one to the north was?”

“Springfield; It may have run 150kT. We didn’t get any radiation from it; the wind was in the west.”

“Like I said, you two get here as fast as you can. I think our new policy will be shoot, shovel and shut-up.”

“Did you know the MSRP on the semi-auto HK416 is \$3,500?”

“Sure did. Do you know what the military pays for them?”

“How much?”

“Around \$550 each plus the accessories. What you paid me actually was what we paid give or take \$100 dollars. Since the M16 magazines are interchangeable with the HK416 magazines we got M16 magazines for the 416s. The 417 magazines are proprietary and the drums weren't cheap. We bought you eight polymer magazines and two drums.”

“Ok, David, I'll get back to you on the move.”

o

“Were you talking to Jack?”

“Yes. They'll be coming down here as soon as they can travel. How much longer before we can get out?”

“A week, ten days tops.”

“Maybe we should saddle up four horses and see how far east we can get on 412.”

“We'd better make it six horses; I'm not sure how much the remaining 18" of snow will slow them down.”

“What we need is a sleigh.”

“Good luck on finding one, one horse or more, open or not.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Jingle Bells. *Dashing through the snow on a one horse open sleigh...*”

“Sorry, I just didn't make the connection. Someone must have a one horse open sleigh.”

“Right, try New England or the Amish.”

“Know any Amish?”

“They don't attend public school.”

“Anything we could jury rig?”

“A toboggan if we had one. The only place I can think of that might have one is that climbing shop in Jonesboro. Off hand, I think we’d be pushing our luck to try Little Rock or whatever is left of it.”

“Maybe I could build a crude toboggan using 1x4s and 2x4s.”

“Give it a shot and when it’s done, I’ll melt some beeswax to coat the bottom. How do you plan to curve the front of the sled boards?”

“If we could steam them enough after it’s assembled, we might be able to get them flexible enough to bend.”

“Are you positive?”

“You’ll have to settle for pretty sure.”

The toboggan went together quickly. My first attempt at heating the boards in boiling water was unsuccessful. My second attempt found me boiling the board twice as long and I managed to add a slight curve. White oak, I learned was one of the best woods for bending but it needed steam heat to soften enough to bend properly. I built a new toboggan from white oak and fashioned a steam chamber from empty oil barrels.

After heating the wood for what seem like forever, I removed the wood from the steamer and proceeded to bend the front around a 6” pipe, forming the toboggan. When it cooled sufficiently, Joanne waxed the bottom and we were set to go, using a single horse to pull the toboggan. I advised Jack that we now had a sled and would head for Mountain Home. He said to watch my six; trouble had been reported in Mountain Home.

“I think we’d better take one LAW apiece, three frags and three white smoke. Jack said there was trouble in Mountain Home.”

“Rifles?”

“I’ll take the HK417 and my Para’s. You should take a handgun of your choice.”

“Ok, I’ll take my Browning and PPK.”

It wasn’t dashing, but riding on the ground made it seem so. The rope strung from the front gave me something to hang onto and Joanne used the reins from the crude harness to guide the horse. A few people were out and about, not many, and all were armed in some fashion. Most waved, tentatively, seeing how we were armed.

We pointed the sled east and headed towards Gassville. Seven and one half miles and nearly two hours later, we were in Gassville and the circumstances were close to the same as Flippin, some people out and about, all armed, most friendly.

Another two hours put us in downtown Mountain Home. Here, we found fewer people. Those we found were very well armed. We tied the horse to a light pole and Joanne began introducing me to the people she knew from her teaching days.

One fella gave a cross-eyed look at the horse and asked, "You need a harness?"

"We could use up to twelve, truth be told."

"Don't have twelve that size. Have four for ten dollars face value old silver each."

"Got a sleigh?"

"Nope. Got a buggy good enough to get around in the snow that's left. Greased the wheels myself day fore yesterday."

"Is it for sale?"

"A working buggy would be pretty valuable."

"Maybe to some. How much?"

"Ounce of gold?"

"Half ounce."

"Three quarter ounce."

"Done. Want to get it now?"

"Joanne?"

"What?"

"I bought a buggy and four sets of harness. Do you want to go get them now?"

"Yes and give him the toboggan as a bonus."

"You didn't like my toboggan?"

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 42

“I liked your toboggan, my aching butt didn’t.”

“Let’s keep it, we might be able to skid logs with it.”

“Only if the harness has a horse collar. A breast collar would be too light.”

When we arrived at his barn, I asked, “Does this harness have breast collars or horse collars?”

“Breast collars.”

“Know where we can get horse collars?”

“Only guy I knew that bred this horse was in Kentucky. He’d have had horse collars and full harnesses.”

“Past tense?”

“Well Yeah. Had a heart attack so I heard. Wife is trying to sell off the horses but can’t get any takers, they’re worth too much.”

“I don’t have the silver so I’m just going to call it an ounce of gold, ok with you?”

“You’re kidding, right. You’re overpaying a bunch.”

“I think we’re getting our money’s worth.”

“Well, sure, I’ll take an ounce of gold. Wouldn’t happen to have it in tenths would you?”

“Pay the man Joanne.”

After we left, with the toboggan across the back seat of the double buggy, Joanne asked, “Are you nuts?”

“How many Andalusian breeders do you know of in Kentucky?”

“And she’s trying to sell out? Hallelujah! Kentucky here we come.”

“He only had about 20 head of breeding stock. I say \$10,000 a head or \$200,000. Allow another \$50,000 for tack and saddles and we might get the whole shooting match for one hundred ounces of gold.”

“I’m going to take 300 ounces, just in case. The question is how do we get there?”

“Hire a semi with chains and pay the driver to buck his way through the snow.”

◦

“Jack, David.”

“Got you 5x5 David.”

“We need you down here like yesterday. Can you do it?”

“What’s up?”

“The guy we bought the horses from had a heart attack and died. His widow is trying to sell of the stock and can’t get any takers. We need someone to cover our backs on a trip to Kentucky.”

“You’re nuts.”

“I’ve been hearing that a lot lately. We checked out Mountain Home and passed the word we were expecting a friend from Missouri to be coming through pulling a trailer and a log splitter. Nobody in Mountain Home will bother you.”

“We’ll try it tomorrow, but if we have a problem, you’d better be standing by your radio.”

◦

“Well?”

“Not one bit of trouble. Those folks in Mountain Home smiled and waved. So what’s this about Kentucky?”

“Like I said, the breeder died and his wife is trying to sell the stock. How many Andalusian breeders do you know of in Kentucky?”

“Joanne said there was only one. All that stock fit in that round barn of yours?”

“It should, it’s over 5,000ft² and we still have the garage we used as a barn. Say 144ft² per horse and we’d have room for 35 head in the dome alone. We can use the garage barn for foaling. And they’ll be outside when it’s warm.”

“What about the land we’re going to clear?”

“How long will it take you to clear a section of forest?”

“Six hundred-forty acres? I should live so long.”

"It's a straight up 50-50 deal on the timber we sell. Remember no black walnuts get cut unless I get an offer I can't refuse. You'll make a good living and we'll get our land cleared. Marion and Joanne can tend to the horses, houses and garden."

"Houses? Our house is in Missouri. That's one hell of a commute, about 50 miles."

"While I was in Mountain Home, I bought you a triple wide with the desert insulation package. All we need to move is your generator and transfer your propane from your tank to ours. Trust me Jack, we're making out extremely well on this deal. We'll recover our cost for that home in the first two years."

"I don't know..."

"Do you think you could get Jason back here to help you? I doubt a degree in American History will do him much good for the moment."

"It's a long way from Buckeye to Flippin, close to 1,300 miles and no gas stations between there and here."

"You'd better figure on 1,500 miles due to detours. A hundred gallons of gas in addition to a full tank should get him here."

"His CJ has an after-market spare tank."

"That's even better. Maybe he can find a small fuel trailer and tow a couple of hundred gallons of stabilized hi octane."

"That would be one hell of a detour. He'd have to drive up to Flagstaff and check out Camp Navajo."

"With luck he could get HK416s and 417s with plenty of extras. Might even find an Mk 15, but that's doubtful. We do have two extra that I bought for Sean and Colin if push comes to shove. Tell him to get all he can if he goes up there. Anything we can use, even something crew served if available."

"David Burns suggesting acquiring a crew served weapon? Be still my heart!"

"Different times..."

"...call for different measures. They do, don't they."

"Joanne could Marion and you drive over to Mountain home and find the well guy? Tell him we need another water line and two of the larger pressure tanks. Ask him to get whatever it takes to install a propane line with the flexible high pressure connecting hoses. Ask him if he knows an electrician who can install an ATS and an Onan RS

12000 propane generator. Tell him about the home we bought and let him act as the general contractor getting the package put together. He'll like the extra money."

"I thought you didn't care for him."

"Still don't, but different times call for different measures. He's a doer and if he thinks there're a few extra bucks in it, he'll bust his ass earning them. Meanwhile, we'll be in Kentucky on a horse buying trip. With that in mind, tell him he's responsible for security of the place and either tending to the horses or hiring that guy we bought the buggy from to do it. On second thought, just tell him to hire that guy to take care of the horses."

Sometimes I get on a roll and only stop long enough to take another deep breath before barking out more *instructions*. I had to do it that way because if someone broke my concentration, I was totally lost and almost had to start over at the beginning. My face would take on shades of blue or purple, depending on how short I was on air. No doubt I'd left out a few things but I could count on Joanne to fill the gaps.

She did and I hope to tell you it was something to behold. She hired a local to move their things from Pontiac to Flippin the next morning including their wood burning stove, deep freezer, ATS and generator. The next morning Marion and she drove to Pontiac and got the remainder of their clothing and family mementos and had the mover add a few things to his truck. The same mover would move all of Jack's stacked firewood down to their new home.

Jack didn't even try to sell their home; there was no housing shortage in the US, for the most part. And where there was a housing shortage, the area was too hot to live in. Finally we headed to Kentucky and the roads were clear enough that the semi didn't need the chains. In fact, we lead most of the way right to the farm where we bought the 12 geldings.

"We heard you might have some horses for sale."

"I know you. You folks bought those geldings."

"Yes we did. We heard you lost your husband."

"He had a heart attack when they announced incoming missiles. I'm not discounting these horses just to get them sold."

"That's what we heard. We paid around six thousand each for the geldings. What are you asking for the breeding stock?"

"I want twelve thousand each for the mares and twenty thousand each for the three stallions."

"How many mares do you have?"

“Twenty. Plus four fillies. The total females are 24 at 12 thousand or two hundred eighty-eight thousand. Add sixty thousand for the three stallions for a total of three hundred forty-eight thousand, tack included.”

“Do you have any geldings?”

“Two. Six thousand each. Three hundred sixty thousand. Gold only, at \$2,400 per ounce.”

“One hundred fifty ounces of gold for everything included saddles, bridles, halters, and harnesses?”

“Yes.”

Joanne pulled out two bags, each containing 100 one ounce gold pieces. Boy, had I been wrong. She stacked them in stacks of ten coins ending up with fifteen stacks of ten coins each. The lady watched fascinated and nearly forgot to fill out the transfer papers. She did that while the stock was loaded on the open slated semi stock trailer and the tack was put in the pickup and trailer. Twenty four plus three plus two plus twelve equals forty one and the dome would only hold thirty five head at 144ft² each. The garage barn would see some use. We got the extra tack at the same place for two ounces of gold and stopped in Jonesboro and bought all the 150' coils of 7/16 static line they had on hand, 30 coils at \$160 per, another two ounces.

When we arrived home late in the day, the ditches had been dug and filled back in. The home hadn't been combined, yet. The hardware they used to align the sections was in place and it would be ready to occupy in 2-3 days. The younger brother had been standing guard duty and he shook his head at the load of horses, waved and headed home.

We got the horses unloaded, paid off the driver and settled the horses. We put the four fillies and two geldings in the garage barn and the mares and stallions in the dome. Finally, we set down to a crockpot of chili that had been simmering on low for about 16 hours. You couldn't even tell it contained pinto beans until well after you ate.

Joanne had spent 154 ounces of her fortune directly and more on the driver, etc. Call it 155 when you consider the fuel. How much did she have left? I'd tell you but she won't tell me. If I had to guess, I'd say she spent 4-5%. But then, she'd cheated from the beginning, investing far more money than I had and broken a few laws concerning owning gold, etc. I still don't have any idea how she got it from her Swiss lockbox to Little Rock. Did she have it shipped to Kitco and have Kitco hold it until they made a distribution to Little Rock after it became legal to own gold in the US? Between us, we still had close to eight figures between our gold and silver holdings and stood to make a fortune harvesting oak, hickory and juniper to reclaim the section of land we bought.

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 43

I'd walked the section before I'd bought it and found three groves of black walnut trees. One of those trees had to be hundreds of years old; it was what I was referring to when I said *an offer I couldn't refuse*. For the next few years, I'd allow it to continue growing until a market for trees of that majesty reappeared. Some of its offspring were about the size of the trees on our five acres. Most of the trees were white oak or hickory, hardwoods. The Juniper (Eastern Red-cedar) was a good source for fence posts due to its natural rot resistance. That section of land was a gold mine and we bought it based on the estimated board feet of the Oak, Hickory and Juniper.

Times had been hard during the first part of the second decade of the 21st Century and there were bargains to be had, if you had the money. That was especially true if it was cold hard cash and you bought when gold was right at \$2,600 and looking to rise. It had, briefly, before settling at \$2,350. It could be on the rise again, but only time would tell. It had been seven months since the missiles flew and we'd yet to hear anything from TPTB.

It seems that either Jerry or TOM had made a point about TPTB getting their acts together. I guess I don't hate TOM, but I sure don't think much of his theory that bad things happen in threes. His theory means that should one more thing happen, we'll end up waiting for five more so we can reach nine. That could be the ultimate I don't know what, catastrophe?

How much could the country bear? First Iran nuked us with 6 5mT bombs. That was followed by another quake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone. It was a slightly different epicenter, but so what. Finally, Pakistan, a notoriously unstable country with the bomb, decided to settle a dispute with India and China with nukes. And China, also a notoriously unstable country with the bomb, decided to nuke Pakistan and the US and Russia for good measure. I could see the US because of what we'd done to North Korea, but still... Russia? Programming error indeed! I could believe computer errors since the computers were all the same and they did just exactly what they were supposed to do and defaulted to the pre-programmed targets. They probably used Dell Inspiration computers with Windows 7 Home Premium.

That puppy needs some work. There is either a problem with the machine or the software and there is no free software support. It's all supposed to be built in. Hah! I learned that if you used McAfee Antivirus, you had to turn off Windows Defender Real time Protection because the two programs clashed. And I'll be damned if I can remember how I learned that. Probably from one of those built-ins or from the McAfee Virtual Technician I downloaded. I do like the McAfee better than Symantec, which I used for years.

The work was finally done by Western Digital with a software upgrade. However the upgrade had a bug or three. I copied the software to my C: drive and reformatted the external drive. Next, I reinstalled the software minus the upgrade. The uninstallation soft-

ware also had a bug and didn't remove something from the Registry. On the other hand, it solved the memory problem.

It's pretty much beside the point; the internet has been down since it started raining warheads. As near as we've been able to determine the only places with local power are isolated and disconnected from the grid. Then, there are the individual cases of persons with power from wind turbines, PV panels or generators. Probably a bunch of *Crackpot Survivalists*, LOL! You think *crackpot* before it rains warheads and you wish like hell you'd been one of them after.

I told Jack we'd recover the cost of the house in the first year or two of harvesting timber. I lied. All we were actually out was the transport and assembly, the owner and his wife, Joshua was his name and her name Sue, were on a round the world cruise at the time. I heard those names linked together somewhere along with Precious.

Anyway, Josh and Sue wouldn't be home anytime soon and those Super Blackhawks hanging on my hips apparently persuaded his remaining employees to settle for what they could get for doing their regular jobs of delivering and assembling the homes. I told them I'd settle up with Josh when I saw him. Plus we paid above the going labor rate in silver. We had a lot of silver!

I tracked down the arborist and he and I walked the section. I explained that we were going to clear cut except for the black walnut trees and we had a few cans of red spray paint to mark the walnuts. Not only did he suggest saving the black walnuts, there were several large white oaks and hickories he thought should be saved. We also had one grove of English walnut trees. Unsure of the matter, I let him mark those trees too.

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Jack had contacted Jason and Jason was homebound, via Flagstaff and points east, after a short trip west. They actually found a 500 gallon trailer and filled it with 92 octane and PRI-G, in the local area. The trip to Flagstaff was uncalled for, but Jack had a shopping list that he managed to convey to Jason in some kind of family code. As near as I could tell, 416 and 417 were mentioned as well as an address near Sky Harbor Airport. McMillan? I also heard ...tom TLE/RL II. LAPD SWAT, right? Cost more than his Taurus, but did it shoot any better?

I can tell you one thing the .44 Remington magnum cartridge wasn't for the faint of heart, even with the Pachmayr grips. Even with earplugs and shooting cups a lot of the bang made it to your ears. It was marginally better with the Winchester because the bang was two foot from your ears. Now tell me something, who walks around wearing earplugs and shooting cups 24/7/365? Right, so when you actually need to use either the revolver or rifle, at best your earplugs are in a plastic vial on a chain looped through a button loop, right?

"Excuse me mister, I can't shoot you until I put in my earplugs."

I may have been born yesterday, but I've been playing with the big kids all day. And, I'm here to tell you that you shoot first and get your hearing back later, hopefully. No, I haven't shot anyone recently, but the day is young.

o

Back to walking the woods. The guy seemed to think we could sell the white oak in Tennessee and Kentucky. Seems like they made a lot of barrels out of white oak. Right, Jack Daniels is making a special batch to commemorate the war. And Jim Beam is probably running 3 shifts turning out the second best. Second best? You haven't heard of Maker's Mark? Second best or lower. Most Jim Beam products are mass market products. Before you get in a huff, Beam owns Maker's Mark these days and it is one of their small bottle volume premium products.

A whole lot of mergers and changes occurred during the first decade of the 21st Century. A person needed a program to know the players. Old Grand Dad was also owned by Beam along with who knew how many other distillers. Never cared for that much, Old Grand Dad, I mean. Sure did like Jack Black, Gentleman Jack and Single Barrel. Ended up buying a whole barrel for \$12,400. Came out at 248 750ml bottles. Barrel price is the retail price of the product in your region of the country. In my case, 248x\$50. Called back and said if they had another barrel that tasted the same, to bottle and ship it. That one cost \$12,600, the angel didn't drink as much and it tasted so close I couldn't tell one from the other. What do you call 500 bottles of Single Barrel? A lifetime supply for a crowd.

Poor old Jack was still working on his lifetime supply and he didn't know about the 480 bottles stored in the hay in the dome. All he knew about was the 20 bottles I left out and I noticed he seemed to favor my barrel better than his. For company, I had two cases of Jack Black and for special company two cases of Gentleman Jack. Only super special guests got the Single Barrel and honestly, we didn't entertain much before the war, let alone after.

A guy in Mountain Home took up brewing and turned out a respectable pale lager similar to Coors, yet slightly different. It sold well in the area and the main problem he had was finding bottles and caps. He hooked up with someone in St. Louis and his fortune was made although he remained a microbrewery. We had a good stock of Cuervo 1800 and Grand Mariner because when the trouble began in the Kashmir, Joanne ordered 18 cases of Grand Mariner and 30 cases of 1800. That's a whole lot of margaritas. My concern was where to get the limes. The answer was from the greenhouse. Remember the recipe is 7:4:3. For every 7 bottles of 1800 one needs 4 bottles of Grand Marnier. Three hundred sixty bottles of 1800 would require 206 bottles of Grand Mariner or 18 cases with a 10 bottles left over.

That wasn't the only thing she ordered, think tea, Bigelow specifically. Think about a truckload of the flavors she usually ordered. Earl Grey was #1 followed by Darjeeling

and Chamomile tied in 2nd place. Come to think of it those were the only 3 flavors she bought as flavors. Jack and Jennifer would appreciate that, if they were real people; although I only ever heard Earl Grey, Chamomile and Plantation Mint mentioned in that story by name. She had also ordered some assortments to have at least some of the other teas we drank, like English Breakfast, English Teatime, Green tea, Chinese Oolong and Jasmine Green tea.

Did we have the world by the tail in our present PAW existence? In a word, no. With Jack and now Jason off clear cutting our section, I was running both splitters and falling behind. The best I could do was cut, split and pile, with piles of red cedar posts, split white oak and Juniper trimmings in a soft wood pile. The faster they moved, the further behind I got. Eventually, the two had to take a week off and let us get caught up.

The new firewood was stacked in one cord piles for ease of loading and notices were posted on the local bulletin boards. Juniper \$200 a cord and hickory and white oak \$300 a cord, delivered, not stacked. Apparently while we were getting caught up, a couple of local yokels decided to clear cut some of their own. I knew those suppressed Rugers would come in handy someday. Our version of the rule of threes kicked in and we dropped off their pickup in Gassville, pointed west. When asked, we explained that we'd been getting caught up on the splitting and stacking. We showed them a great deal of respect, each got his own stump hole and their equipment, weapons included, ended up on the bottom of the lake.

Eventually a Deputy from Yellville came looking for them. We explained, straight faced, that we couldn't have seen them because around then we'd been busy cutting, splitting and stacking. Someone had seen two guys dropping off the pickup in Gassville but the descriptions were vague, more of a glance than anything. The only reason he stopped by was because we were clear cutting the section and remotely matched the descriptions as did about 400 more guys in the general area.

"I thought he had us for sure when he said there were eyewitnesses who saw the pickup being dropped off."

"Why? We drove through Gassville before turning around and dropping the pickup. The sun still wasn't up. The bodies are beneath 4 feet of dirt and their equipment is rusting on the bottom of the lake. *To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven.* The standing order is to shoot looters on sight. What have we looted, so far?"

"Just the things Jason brought back from Camp Navajo. Oh, I meant to return your HK416s and so forth."

"Why, you paid for them? I'd be willing to buy some of the Mk 211 and extra polymer magazines if you can spare them."

“Didn’t cost us squat and you know it. There are 7 Tac-50s; how about we split it 7 ways?”

“Works for me. We need to get that Ma Deuce set up on the dome roof. Did he get combat mix?”

“It’s all AP and APIT, 50 cans worth.”

“Save the links and we’ll assemble two belts of Raufoss with every 5th round being APIT.”

“Not necessary, the Raufoss is also available as a tracer round, Armor-Piercing-Incendiary-Tracer, Mk 300 Mod 0. He got a few cans of that too.”

“How did he manage to get all that matériel from Flagstaff to Flippin?”

“He added a trailer between the CJ and the tank trailer. It’s a good thing he had that much gas, it took him 2,200+ miles to get here.”

“In a CJ pulling a miniature B train? Let’s take time to set up the Ma Deuce.”

“Expecting trouble?”

“Always. In view of the looters, it’s better safe than sorry. Are you two carrying when you’re cutting?”

“Handguns only.”

“Better add an H & K, either caliber.”

“I’ll use the 417; I like it better than the 416.”

“What about Jason?”

“That will be up to him.”

“You should know that the trees we don’t want cut are marked with red paint. That includes all of the black walnut trees, several white oaks, a few hickory and a few Junipers. I went through the timber with the arborist and there is even one grove of English walnut we also marked to save.”

“Is this going to be a problem avoiding the various no cutting zones?”

“I really doubt that because each is a grove of several trees of the same species. If you run into a problem, we’ll get together and determine the best approach and possibly bypass an area all together and come back to it later. There should be enough to keep Ja-

son and you busy for a few years. Now, since we have the D-6, we'll skid the whole logs to the nearest road and I'll buy a crane we can use to load them onto semis. The D-6 will also let us push out the stumps and contour the land as needed. The branches alone should give us more than enough firewood to sell and I'll try to line up a deal with one of the timber companies to buy the logs."

Sweet Dreams – Chapter 44

“Got it all figured out, huh?”

“Flying by the seat of my pants is a better description, but Joanne has lived in this area her whole life. She’s not shy about providing guidance when needed. All I can tell you is that if Jason and you hump your butts, you’ll be rolling in money even considering the times. Firewood is an immediate need and various kinds of lumber are going to be needed to rebuild this country of ours. Don’t be shy about hiring help if you need it. With our 50-50 split those costs are applied against the whole before it’s divided up. Will Jason settle for a salary or an hourly wage?”

“Probably want an hourly wage in the beginning and we’ll talk salary or a share when the time comes.”

“Good enough. Ok, you two are burning daylight, get to it and I go looking for that crane.”

I went back to the guy who hauled the horses for us and asked if he would be interested in a long term project hauling logs. He was, provided we could come up with enough diesel fuel. I got Joanne and we drove down to a fuel terminal on the outskirts of Little Rock. It was a bit hot, but it had full tanks. Next, we located a mobile 3-phase generator to power the pumps and locked it up in one of the buildings.

The following day, we drug the electrician down to hook in the generator and spotted a decent sized truck mounted crane in the process. So, we stole it and drove it back home. It would turn out to be only the first of many strategic reallocations, which included the diesel fuel. The distributor had anti-gelling solution (#1 diesel), PRI-D and PRI-G so we put those under lock and key too.

Our solution to pumping the diesel fuel wasn’t elegant but worked. We located and installed a 92-89-87 octane gas pump and connected the diesel to 87, the kerosene to 89 and the gasoline to 92 after replacing the three phase electric motor with a single phase electric motor. The diesel tank trailer was connected directly to the diesel tank and our 500 gallon gas tank to the 92. We found a 1,000 gallon tank for white kerosene, which in a pinch could be used as an anti-gel.

Joanne talked to three timber companies and struck a deal with one of them for the white oak and hickory logs. They weren’t interested in the red cedar and it took her a while to find a company who would take a portion of them to produce fence poles. We kept the unsold posts for a future use, fencing our section.

The section was adjacent to our five acres and Jack and David started there. Eventually they had 20 acres clear and we put in a wooden horse fence so our horses had pasture. I’m not clear on the grass mix that was concocted and seeded, but the horses loved it. As additional land was cleared, level and seeded, we extended the fence.

About a year into the project, one of the local beef raisers came to us and offered a bull and 12 Black Angus cows. The pasture was about 40 acres and we went ahead with the deal. When the vet was out checking on the horses, we had him check out the cattle and they were in good health and 6 were pregnant. He explained that while most people consider Black Angus to be beef cattle they produced a fair amount of milk and even told us where we could buy some *good used* milking equipment for a herd of twenty cows.

"It looks like we're going to need another barn."

"I'm afraid so. Why not build a second dome and get one with a 50' radius."

"But, that would increase the floor space from 5,026ft² over 7,854ft²."

"Right and that would be ideal for the horses. Forty one head at 144ft² is close to 6,000ft² and some of the mares are with foal."

"I suppose you want hogs too?"

"Well... I'd rather buy feeders and raise them to market weight and butcher them. On the other hand a large flock of chickens wouldn't be that much trouble."

"Uh-huh. Just remember that the livestock are Marion's and your department."

"That may not be a problem; Jason is seeing someone in Flippin."

"Start looking for a double wide."

"Already found one at the same place we got the triple wide. It will be ready for occupancy in about 10 days."

"What aren't you telling me?"

"They're in love."

"What else?"

"She's pregnant, with twins. She's 13 weeks along."

"I thought a woman knew when she missed her first period."

"She has a history of irregular periods so it wasn't until she missed a second that she took the test and went to the doctor. He confirmed the pregnancy but held off for a month before he did the ultrasound because it's difficult to determine gender before 12 weeks. He did the test at 13 weeks and they're expecting twin girls."

“She’s not going to be much help this year.”

“She’ll be able to do light housekeeping and keep up all three homes. She can keep an eye on the canners for us and turn off the heat when appropriate and let us know a batch is done. She should be able to do some hoeing in the garden at first. Plus, she rides like she was born on a horse and Jason says she’s a regular Annie Oakley.”

“What does her family have to say about this?”

“Her parents have been divorced for years. And, if I understand it right, like mother, like daughter.”

“How old is she?”

“About 6 months younger than Jason, so 23.”

“Aside from being short on common sense, is she intelligent?”

“She graduated from ASU with a degree in accounting. Came home and went to work for a company in Mountain Home until the war. Jason ran into her in Flippin and the rest, as they say, is history.”

“Jack hasn’t said anything.”

“Marion said he’s pissed. She’s not and likes Cynthia.”

“Jason mentioned a Cindy.”

“She’s the one.”

“So we’ll have another mouth to feed and 2 extra in about 6 months.”

“Make that 2 extra now and 2 additional in about 6 months.”

“Who did I miss?”

“Her Mom.”

“Maybe we should invite the whole damned town.”

“Nah, they’re only a couple of miles from work. Jack hired most of them at minimum wage, his minimum wage, to harvest timber. You didn’t think that Jason and he cleared 40 acres by themselves did you?”

“I did tell him to hire whatever help he needed.”

“He did. He also pulled a gun on one guy who was going to cut one of the marked trees. He told him if he cut the tree, he end up buried in the stump hole after he was beat to death with a bullwhip over a period of a month.”

“Nice, a fitting punishment; those marked trees are worth another million dollars in the right market. The market doesn’t exist at the moment, but all of the trees are healthy and just getting more valuable.”

“You read that in *Expedition!*”

“I did, but I knew it before. I just had no idea how valuable the trees were and did some checking. Certain European hardwoods are the most prized for gunstocks, but the market is definitely there for American Black Walnut. Royal Russian Circassian Walnut may be the best and Bastogne Walnut a really good selection, but some of the black walnuts are comparable. An Exhibition Select grade of gunstock wood can bring over \$4,000 for a single piece of wood.

“Companies producing veneers like the long straight boles for peeling, but better veneers are produced by slicing on half-round lathes. The gunstock makers like the patterned woods better. There’s a market for most of the tree, including some of the larger branches for handgun stocks and knife scales.”

“You realize that Jack is paying your employees in firewood and silver, don’t you?”

“It was discussed and I told him to do whatever he thought was right. The people aren’t our responsibility but each has something the other needs. We need our land cleared and the timber harvested. They need work and a means to heat their homes and put food on the table. How long before they finish up the new dome?”

“I meant to discuss that with you. The first had a 40’ radius which gave us 5,026ft². I had initially planned on the second having a 50’ radius which would give us an additional 7,854ft². But, when I discussed it with the engineer, a 60’ radius would give us 11,310ft² and five vertical floors for storage of feed, grain and anything else we wanted to store. It cost more, but we’re not getting any younger and we can’t take it with us. So, I went with the 60’ radius.”

“I can still use a tape measure Joanne; it’s no secret that you decided to go larger. And a 60’ radius dome would allow you to house 78 or 79 head of horses. That gives you room in the old dome for cattle, hogs and even the chickens. Just don’t go trying to grow fish in a tank fed by worms fed by rabbits. I hate rabbits and squirrels. For the life of me, I can’t see why people would eat either when they have Black Angus beef and Yorkshire and Hampshire hogs to eat.”

“We’re going to end up with quite a herd of hogs. I had intended to just buy feeders, but you know how that came out. Both the Yorkshire breeder and the Hampshire breeder

wanted to unload their entire herds and move south to warmer climates. I think maybe Sagan and his buddies were close but missed the mark. We had one bad winter and the second had less than half as much snow. Another year and we'll be back to normal or I miss my guess."

"It's funny, in a way, Joanne. I've collected firearms most of my life; primarily just because I'm a gun nut. We both spent a lot of money on something that turned out to be nothing more than a very expensive hobby. I can count all the people I ever shot and killed on two fingers. And to think, I shot them both with a .22. We have as many illegal firearms as we do legal firearms under the old law. Who knows what the state of the law is at the moment? I see as many select fire weapons these days as I see hunting rifles.

"Most of the deer in that section of timber have either been killed for meat or driven off by the logging operation. One of the reasons for keeping some of those trees was to provide food for the deer. They like to eat the shoots in the spring when they first appear. If there weren't so many people depending on us for the essentials, I'd be tempted to slow down the harvest. It was, after all, intended to be a long term project."

Joanne excused herself to go to the bathroom and I poured three fingers of the good stuff and sort of sat back to contemplate the meaning of life. My thoughts were in no particular order, but they started with boot camp. We were issued M16A1 rifles in 1971. The A2 version wasn't adopted until 1982 and the Marine Corps were the first to adopt the A2. Our rifles fired M193 ammo and the barrels had one turn in twelve. The A2 was a different creature, featuring one turn in seven, firing M855 (SS109) ammo, different sights, foregrip, you name it. It also had slightly better range, 800 meters maximum.

They only made a few of the A3s. The A3s were A2s with the A1 lower and used primarily by Special Forces types. You see, as is well known, the Marine Corps and Army discovered during Vietnam that full auto wasn't the best choice. In the heat of battle, the soldiers and Marines tended to forget to release the trigger and emptied a full mag in seconds. Where a sniper typically expended 1.3 rounds per kill, the regular troop's expended 50,000 rounds per kill or so goes the story.

To overcome this, the A2 was born which featured a 3-round burst lower assembly. As I pointed out, the lowers were interchangeable and an A3 was an A2 with an A1 lower. By the time I had enlisted, the problems with missing cleaning kits, lack of chrome plating and wrong gunpowder had been resolved. And, Mr. McNamara, in an act that could only be attributed to a civilian executive, had ordered the destruction of thousands of M14 rifles, some new in the box. Man, what I wouldn't give for a truckload of TRW M14s.

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So for 40 odd years, the US military stumbled along with the second best. Yeah the M16 was more accurate than an AK47, but so what? A person could bury the AK in mud and sand for a week, dig it out and shoot it on the spot. Typical combat ranges had been *deemed* to be 300 meters or less, and don't let the facts confuse you.

Jack, Marion, Joanne and I had our share of the civilian versions of the M14 rifles, mostly the fancy, expensive high quality models with top quality optics and registered *modified flashhiders*. Those were legal, in most states anyway, if you had the \$200 and cooperative LEOs. They even improved the accuracy of the rifles oh so slightly. We shot surplus in our loaded models and match grade only in our better rifles, when it mattered.

Now, in one fell swoop the President had replaced the POS M16 with the much better HK416s and HK417s. But had a lesson been lost? The German rifles were full autos. I knew that for a fact because we had some that had *fallen off a truck* or something. These things have a lot in common with the trade in illegal drugs. You couldn't eliminate the weapons or the drugs because there was always a ready market. Think about it and tell me I'm 100% wrong!

Although we had no way to know, Heckler and Koch had anticipated the problem with full auto and had replacement parts that Company armorers' could use to convert the full auto firearms to 3 round burst. It had been a hit and miss proposition because of parts availability and problems too numerous to mention. Parts were being allocated to Brigades on an allocation system and it would take a while for all of the conversions. And then, the war happened and there was more on the armorers' minds than converting a bunch of rifles that worked just fine like they were.

"You look like you were a million miles away."

"I was thinking about firearms; what's new with that?"

"As long as we only have to use them on the firing range, nothing."

"We can hope, can't we?"

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Keep in mind that not all of the *bad guys* out there are black or ride motorcycles. There are all kinds of peckerwoods mixed in too. Peckerwood (or simply Wood) is a slur used through the mid-20th century by southern African Americans and upper class whites used to describe poor rural whites. It is roughly synonymous with *cracker* and *redneck*, more prevalent in the southeast, and *White trash*, although the last implies a degree of moral turpitude. Blacks saw blackbirds as a symbol of themselves, and the redheaded woodpecker as a representation of working class whites. They considered them loud and troublesome like the bird, and sometimes with red hair like the woodpecker's head

plumes. This word is still widely used by southern blacks to refer to southern whites. Pecker-wood, (aka Peck-a-wood), is also a mentality in which white people deem themselves superior to African-Americans, look down on them, and justify ill and inhumane treatment of them as a basis of discrimination and separation. Whereas the word Pecker-wood may refer to, but is not limited to, southern whites, the Pecker-wood mentality is prevalent in all regions in the United States, and throughout the world.

Arkansas was a Confederate state during the Civil War. As of the last census, the population was 77% white and 14% black. That's a whole lot of peckerwoods in a time post-war while the living isn't easy, to coin a term from *Porgy and Bess*. Like any state, Arkansas had its fair share of National Guard Armories and a few military Posts/Camps. Posts/Camps where a determined person could find unmodified H&K firearms and plenty of ammo to go with them. They might even find a few crew served weapons that some of them knew how to use from their days in the military.

Remember when we said:

"Different times..."

"...call for different measures. They do, don't they."

Substitute *desperate* for *different* to see where this is leading. Some of those surviving peckerwoods had heard of a thriving community up near Bull Shoals and a little recon identified the community as Flippin and specifically our timber, gardening and livestock operations. It was all over except for the shooting. However...I was born in 1953, not yesterday, and I had 28 years in the Army. One didn't have to be Albert Einstein to be aware of the possibilities.

We'd done a little shopping of our own, to fill in a few holes, and it wasn't in our food supplies. You've heard of Fort Chaffee, right? Just down the road from Fort Smith (the community). Elvis wasn't stationed there, but he did pass through on his way to Fort Hood. We might be in our mid-sixties, but we stayed in shape and could still pick up all of our weapons, one, or more, at a time.

We visited Fort Chaffee early on. We located and secured a significant number of HK416s still in unopened boxes and HK417s also in unopened boxes. We opened the boxes to check on the contents and helped ourselves to all the available polymer magazines and 50 round drum magazines. Fort Chaffee had a good supply of M118LR (note the verb tense) as well as a large stock of M855A1. We didn't find any of the new Ma Deuces but there was nothing wrong with the old ones or the M240Bs or Mk 19s, excepted for quantity of Mk 19s. We skipped the SAWs because we had HK416s anyway.

We had radio equipped *watchers* in Flippin, usually the housewives (homemakers, whatever). We had horse mounted patrols out in a one mile radius of the home site/timber operation. The patrols were spaced at irregular intervals varying from 15 to 30 minutes; we weren't short on war horses. They were so damned expensive, no one

could afford one! Did you actually add up our investment? It was seventy-two thousand plus three hundred sixty-nine thousand six hundred, a total of ~\$441 thousand. It's rounded because I can't remember what we gave for the first 12 sets of extra tack and coils of climbing rope. It's probably closer to \$443K. The rope was originally \$150 a coil plus tax, I paid for that. Joanne had paid cash for the tack...

Can a person survive if they aren't rich? Sure they can, it's just a little harder. Besides, it is my wife with the really deep pockets. I still haven't figured out how she managed to contact Monolithic Construction down in Italy, Texas. There isn't any phone and the mail didn't work all that well before the war...

I asked and was told that when Monolithic realized they'd come through the event intact, they sent out salesmen to prior customers soliciting additional business. They had lines on all the insulation, shotcrete, tornado proof doors and windows plus a large inventory of the airbags used to construct the domes. They could construct the dome over the outside or in the inside of the airbag, customer's choice. The outside construction ran more because it required more materials. Joanne had opted to the outside method and that permitted them to reuse the airbag.

Most customers, the engineer said went with the internal construction but since they could reuse that airbag form, Joanne got a very small discount. Both the windows and doors met some sort of OSHA criteria as being tornado proof. Hell, he even had a video on his laptop he ran to show me the window tests.

With the outside construction, they added shotcrete over the foam before installing the rebar. The 60' radius dome was a half-sphere rather than some of their designs that weren't true spheres. Consequently, like the earlier dome, it had more soil at the bottom, close to 15' to ensure the soil stayed in place. Joanne also opted for the roof deck of bituminous and a parapet with the drain holes. The only difference in this project was that they used a tornado proof door and a blast door for roof access and a larger air filtration system.

"Why are you putting in an air filtration system, expecting another war?"

"No, it's a closed in space with few openings and it's the only way to insure an adequate air supply. The biological, radiological and chemical filters only kick in if we move some pipes to connect in the filters."

"Is that RS 15000 going to provide enough power?"

"Nope, I had to add an RS 30000 to ensure enough power. But they located another 30,000 gallon propane tank and enough propane to fill it and refill our tank."

"Don't forget that propane in Jack and Marion's tank."

"I didn't. The fuel was moved to our tank and we moved their tank down here for the two mobile homes. We exhausted the available local supply of propane filling it. I wish we had a better way to deal with those tanks of gas and diesel, they're an explosion waiting to happen."

"Have you checked around for larger diesel tanks? I know they make double walled fiberglass tanks with capacities up to 40,000 gallons."

"Who makes them?"

"A company named Containment Solutions. I believe their nearest manufacturing location is Conroe, Texas."

"I wonder if that's near Italy, Texas."

"Ask that engineer."

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"What did he say?"

"It's between Italy and Flippin. He said it was just a little south of Dallas-Fort Worth. I let him use our radio to call his home office and they'll look into it and get as large of a tank as is available."

"Are you sure you want to spend that much additional money?"

"Like I said, we can't take it with us and more fuel would enhance our security. We'll have 60,000 gallons of propane and 43,500 gallons of diesel."

"Maybe they can find something smaller for gasoline, say 10,000 gallons."

"Ok, I'll ask. Are you willing to spring for part of the fuel?"

"I'll go for the 10,000 gallons of gas and help on the propane, say another 10,000 gallons. A portion of the diesel and gasoline are used in the timber process anyway."

"How's that going?"

"They've cleared another ten acres. I think we'll wait to move the fence until that's twenty acres. We're spending as much time building fence as cutting timber and growing our food supply. We have a dozen head of cattle and 100 head of hogs ready for market. I talked to the locker plant in Mountain Home and they'll take all we don't want. He mentioned that Hormel has reopened and he can get us whole Cure 81s and thick or thin sliced bacon. I ordered four cases of hams and eight cases of bacon."

“What about butter?”

“I’m still looking. They did hire a few locals and can process chickens, cut them in half and coat the quarters in ice. They’re selling the livers and gizzards to people who can’t afford the quarters.”

“There’re several poultry packing plants in Arkansas including ConAgra and Tyson Foods. Maybe we should check them out and keep the chickens for egg production.”

“Ok. Be sure you butcher the roosters or keep the brood stock completely separate from the layers. You know if we had the locker do the butchering, we could have them save the backs and make our own chicken stock.”

“Let me think about it. Ok, I thought about it; we’ll try that one time only. Wait a minute, there’s someone on the radio from town.”

“How many? How were they armed? Anything else? What kind of machine guns? Big and looked heavy... yes, I understand, it’s a tripod mount. Lock your doors and keep out of sight. Warn as many of the others as you can.”

“Large group, 100 to 150, small arms and machine guns, at least one probably a Ma Deuce.”

“Call Jack and have everyone return to the home site. I’ll move additional ammo to the top of both domes. Notify the roving patrols to avoid contact and come in behind them. Remind them that we’ll be shooting in their general direction. Tell Jack to drive the live-stock into the domes on the way in; horses to the large dome and cattle and hogs to the smaller dome. Did she give you an ETA?”

“They’re just passing through Flippin on foot so it could be anywhere between 30 to 60 minutes.”

“We should have plenty of time. Move your weapons to the first dome and I’ll move mine to the second. You take charge on your dome and I’ll do the same on mine. Try using the Tac-50s first and move down to the Super Matches next. When they’re close in, switch to the H&Ks. Remember we have grenades and rockets and depending where they set up their machine guns, we might take out a few with the rockets. It’s a shame we don’t have any land mines. I thought about them but with some of the children soon to be underfoot, opted to not acquire them. They’re only the M14 toe poppers but they sure can ruin your day.”

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“What’s up?”

“Get your weapons and I’ll fill you in.”

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“Which weapons?”

“Your Tac-50 and Super Match.”

“How many?”

“Could be up to 150.”

“I’ll be back.”

Each of the crew served weapons had at least two people, adequate for a static defense. Jack returned quickly and had magazines filled exclusively with Mk 211, including the extras Jason had picked up from Phoenix. Well, maybe they had picked up some body armor but, it wouldn’t slow down a 750gr A-MAX bullet.

We had a clear field of fire of about 1,000 meters provided they didn’t manage to get behind us. If that happened the range could be as short as 400 meters. Still every crenel has at least one person available and often two. Second, we had cover and they didn’t except from the rear at 400 meters. Third, they overestimated the distance they could actually shoot. Fourth, they underestimated the difficulty of putting accurate fire through the 18” wide crenel from the distance they were shooting from. Finally, we had the *home field advantage*.

We were probably outnumbered three to one and *home field advantage* is at least three to one cancelling out their numerical superiority. Our cover probably switched the numerical advantage to three to one in our favor. Finally, we were defending our homes further increasing our advantage.

They were game and made the best possible use of the terrain. Many obviously had military training. The one thing, above all else, they lacked was an Mk 19 Mod 3 with an effective range of 1,400 meters (1,500 yards). We didn’t; enough said. The firefight lasted somewhere between thirty minutes and an hour, call it forty five minutes. Those who tried to withdraw were taken out by the mounted patrol members. Finally when maybe ninety percent of their force lay dead on the ground or dying the last fifteen to twenty dropped their weapons and stood arms out to their sides or hands on the top of their heads.

A fusillade of shots rang out, reducing their number to zero standing. The mounted patrols, by now unmounted, worked their way through the bodies and wounded, correcting poor marksmanship where needed, or just being humane. The body count was 143, living 0. We had 3 outright fatalities, 6 seriously wounded and another dozen or so with non-life threatening wounds. We had two doctors and five nurses with a temporary surgery setup in the fallout shelter. Nobody died, although it was touch and go in one case especially, Jason.

Cynthia hung in there; barely leaving his side long enough to use the bathroom or eat a few bites of soup, etc. When he came to, she was holding his hand. His first words were, "will you marry me?"

"Promise to try harder not to get shot?"

"Oh yeah, I promise."

"Of course I'll marry you, you idiot."

Meanwhile, we'd collected arms, ammunition a large collection of Bowie Knives and Arkansas Toothpicks. The undamaged weapons were function checked, cleaned and stored, in two piles...three round burst and full auto...both models. The extra machine guns were cleaned, checked out and found new homes on the top of the two domes.

We were surprised to find a fair amount of gold and silver coins, even some platinum, among the raiders. The D-6 was used to dig a long slit trench and the bodies lined up. Then, and only then, did we contact the Sheriff's offices in Yellville and Mountain Home.

"Kill them all?"

"During or after, yes sir."

"No wounded?"

"None that survived."

"What about their weapons? We'll be having those."

"Yeah right, spoils of war and if you'll notice, the slit trench is extra long."

"You would wouldn't you Army boy? You're a real hard ass."

"Only when it becomes necessary Sheriff. But, between Jack and me, we have fifty two years of practice doing just that. You might try putting the word out on the grapevine that it's stupid to mess with Baxter and Marion Counties. Now, if you'll come up with a list of names the two of you trust to be armed with weapons we collected, we have some 3 round burst weapons we can spare, up to 90. We also have some full auto versions for your Deputies, if you want them. We can give you what ammunition we recovered, but you'll have to check out Fort Chaffee and a few other places for more. One of our outriders will show you where they stashed their vehicles in and around Flippin. Anything else? I'd like to get the hole filled."

"Did you get ID?"

“Whatever there was is in those two cardboard boxes over there.”

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“How’s Jason?”

“Conscious. The first words out of his mouth were to propose to Cindy. She made him promise to try harder not to get shot and when he did, she accepted. I’m not so sure about having her mother out here though. We’re going to have to lock up the liquor.”

“A problem?”

“I think so.”

“Well, that means she won’t give a damn if it’s rotgut or the good stuff. Have someone find us a supply of rotgut. Probably whiskey and vodka. Stock her house in Flippin and she’ll leave, until she runs out or drinks herself to death. Hell, I’m feeling magnanimous today, I’ll foot the tab.”

“How did it end up?”

“We had three locals dead, Jason and five others seriously wounded and a bunch more with scratches, bullet creases and what not. I intend to do something for the families that lost the husband. If you can, get the names and we’ll figure out a program to keep them fed and clothed. We can hire the wives to help in the gardens for a share of food and some silver for other expenses. There are some single men around and the situations should resolve themselves, eventually.”

“Don’t take the burden of the whole world on our shoulders David. There has to be a limit to what even we can do.”

“I didn’t have much trouble getting the son of one good friend, Jack, almost killed.”

“Get over it. You didn’t shoot him. On another subject totally unrelated, we have two forty thousand gallon Containment solution tanks plus a twenty thousand gallon gasoline tank on the way up from Texas along with three used thirty thousand gallon propane tanks and two new RS 60000 generators. They’re going to empty the 2,500 gallon diesel tank and fill it with the clear kerosene for the lamps and other uses.”

“What’s this going to cost?”

“Transportation and installation for everything excluding the fuels. They’ll get them here in Arkansas from a fuel depot. They already picked up PRI products from the plant in Houston. The grand total is two and one half million but think of what we’ll have; enough of everything to last us the remainder of our lives.”

“However long that may be.”

“You’re really down in the mouth aren’t you?”

“I was an E-9, not an O-10 or O-11.”

“The NCOs run the military David; I don’t know how many times I’ve heard Jack and you say that.”

“Too many, there’s no doubt about that now.”

“So, you were a REMF?”

“A Lady shouldn’t use language like that Joanne. No, I wasn’t a REMF, at least not intentionally. But the only war I was involved in lasted four stinking days.”

“Are you proud of your service?”

“You’re damned right, I’m proud of my twenty-eight years. I put it on the line and was ready to go when called.”

“Whose fault was it that you only got called once?”

“Nobody’s, it was the luck of the draw. Minor in psychology at ASU, did you?”

“Knew a psych major, nice guy; also very married and totally in love with his wife.”

“Regardless, I don’t know if I’m up to this. It’s gone from two deaths on my hands to five.”

“It’s still two, the men you shot. Did you count how many you killed during the battle?”

“There wasn’t time Joanne. I made the best shot I could and moved on to the next target. I saw them fall, but have no idea if they were dead or wounded. And then, when I switched to the HK417, there wasn’t time to even look after I fired a short burst, it was getting dicey.”

“I didn’t count either David. It was more than a few because I saw their heads explode. I used my version of the failure to stop drill and went for the head first. Some of them had body armor, you know.”

“I know. Jack had nothing but Mk 211 for his Tac-50 and he aimed for center mass each time. He sort of whooped when one of the opposing forces blew-up.”

“How many of the recovered machine guns are useable?”

“Two Ma Deuces and four of the M240Bs; we can salvage parts from the others. I had them function checked, cleaned and emplaced on the two domes. I meant what I told the two Sheriffs. What I’m afraid of is that some larger group thinks they can succeed where this bunch failed.”

“David, you’ve played poker I’m sure. If so, you know that all a person can do is play the hand they’re dealt. Our exposure will be limited to the few trips we make off the reservation so to speak. Those times when we shop for staples, deliver and pick up meat and so forth. We’ll just have to take precautions and drag along a small, skilled guard force. Do you think we could come up with few operators?”

“Special Forces types? We have some on the roving patrol.”

“Talk to them and see if they know of any others we can hire; single men preferred. That should eliminate our having to deal with grieving widows and children.”

We had one Force Recon, one SEAL, two Army Special Forces and 3 Rangers among the roving patrols. I hadn’t thought it was that many. Each of them thought they might know of one or two people, who might be interested, provided they were alive and they could find them. I let them take what equipment they wanted, extra mounts, some hard money for contingencies and sent them on their ways.

We were rewarded beyond our wildest dreams, ending up with a total of 25 operators, including our 7, who had last seen duty in Afghanistan. One thing a person should know about the Special Operations community is that the operators are high ranking enlisted, E-6 through E-9 for the most part. The military paid them well because of the inherent risk in their jobs. Each group had something in their training that compared to Hell Week in BUD/S. These men were disciplined and took their situation seriously. All met the description of *a lean mean fighting machine*.

Each was proficient in every weapon we possessed and a few we didn’t. It didn’t matter, they had their own. To a man, they selected the HK417s as their principal firearm and Jack lost his collection of Kimber Custom TLE/RL IIs. Some of them favored the Glock 21 with a Glock 30 for backup, although I can’t fathom why. They had a mix of Accuracy International, McMillan, and .408 CheyTac fired from a Cheyenne Tactical M-200 Intervention. Strange looking gun, but it was accurate and even better than a Tac-50 in the owner’s opinion. You know what they say about opinions and face it the guy making the claim was half my age.

We selected the nineteen best of the men and the others trained with them before returning to the roving patrol as team leaders. The most immediate concern was training them to ride like they’d been born in a saddle and it didn’t take long, they had learned a lot on the trail back to Flippin. Firearms’ training was even shorter and when they’d taught us what they knew, they went on the payroll fulltime with room and board and one gold Eagle salary per month.

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Interested as I was in their military backgrounds, I didn't delve in their personal backgrounds beyond getting assurances that all were single. I did notice that three of the guys sat a good saddle. About six months after they began working fulltime, the same three requested an unpaid leave of absence to go to Tennessee and Kentucky to look for personal mounts. They explained that the entire group of 25 had saved their wages and they'd be buying mounts for all 25.

They were looking for two breeds, Tennessee Walking Horses and Morgans. They seemed to be very confident they could achieve their goals so Joanne and I gave them the go ahead. They were back in a month with a string of ~100 horses, half and half. The story emerged that one of the fella's family bred Walkers and a second's family bred Morgans. They bought the horses *inexpensively* including a full set of tack. They had even managed to acquire enough 1892 Winchester clones to equip each of the horses with a rifle and a pair of SAA clones in the pommel bags, all .45 Colt.

While the firearms were marked Cimarron, they were Uberti through and through, as were the holsters and rifle scabbards. Each horse had saddlebags, pommel bags, a lariat, saddle, bridle, saddle blanket, breast collar, back cinch and halter. A rig to hobble the horses was tied on the saddle horn and each saddlebag contained 200 rounds of .45 Colt.

When asked, the explanation given was that the older style firearms were intended to provide an edge by allowing an opposing force to believe they didn't have the Glock, Kimbers and H&K417s. The scabbard on the Andalusians only served to reinforce the image. I think we hired a sneaky bunch of SOBs, thank God. We could herd the cattle to the locker plant and haul the hogs a wagon load at a time.

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Just short of the two year anniversary of the first attack, a larger group of undesirables took their shot at taking over our operation. We now had 120 acres of the timber harvested and sold as logs, fence posts or firewood. One of the Black Walnut groves was now a small grove surrounded by cleared land and the grove of English Walnuts was close to being isolated from the remaining timber. We had two Hickory groves standing alone in two separate fields.

We were producing enough food for both Counties and a few of the adjoining. We were also accumulating hard currency, at a rate far lower than I'd envisioned. We were getting close to replacing the funds spent on the second dome, fuel tanks, fuel and the new generators. Life was good and getting better. Much like it had been before the first attack.

We had two new families living on the home site now; Sean and Colin with their wives and children. Rather than continue in the Coast Guard, they had resigned their commis-

sions, linked up and returned to the only legitimate home they knew. They had been working together to generate power from the Bull Shoals Dam. The dam had eight generators, four capable of 45mw each and four capable of 50mw each for a combined output of 380mw. Given the remaining population in the area, if the hydro turbines could be brought on line and local grid be properly routed, Mountain Home west to Yellville would have power for the first time in a long time.

There were almost too many variables to deal with to get the project up and running. Electronic controls for the powerhouse had to be replaced or repaired. The idle turbines needed to be serviced and made operable. They had to locate someone who was familiar with the area grid who could guide them in opening and closing switches, identifying damaged equipment and locating repair parts or replacement equipment.

Their greatest advantage lay in the fact that no country had used a HEMP weapon against the United States. China had the capacity but lacked enough delivery vehicles. None of the missiles that were ready to go were equipped with HEMP devices. Russia had enough missiles for everything; but like the US had all of its special warheads in storage.

The three primary countries in the exchange, China, the US and Russia all had reserve weapons which included HEMP warheads. All three nations also had a *No First Use* policy which means no HEMP weapons. A HEMP device was first discovered during the US test *Starfish Prime*.

In July 1962, a 1.44 megaton (6.0 PJ) United States nuclear test in space, 400 kilometers (250 mi) above the mid-Pacific Ocean, called the *Starfish Prime* test, demonstrated to nuclear scientists that the magnitude and effects of a high altitude nuclear explosion were much larger than had been previously calculated. *Starfish Prime* also made those effects known to the public by causing electrical damage in Hawaii, about 1,445 kilometers (898 mi) away from the detonation point, knocking out about 300 streetlights, setting off numerous burglar alarms and damaging a telephone company microwave link.

Starfish Prime was the first successful test in the series of United States high-altitude nuclear tests in 1962 known as *Operation Fishbowl*. The subsequent *Operation Fishbowl* tests gathered more data on the high-altitude EMP phenomenon.

The *Bluegill Triple Prime* and *Kingfish* high-altitude nuclear tests of October and November 1962 in *Operation Fishbowl* finally provided electromagnetic pulse data that was clear enough to enable physicists to accurately identify the physical mechanisms that were producing the electromagnetic pulses.

The EMP damage of the *Starfish Prime* test was quickly repaired because of the ruggedness (compared to today) of the electrical and electronic infrastructure of Hawaii in 1962.

The relatively small magnitude of the *Starfish Prime* EMP in Hawaii (about 5600 volts/meter) and the relatively small amount of damage done (for example, only 1 to 3 percent of streetlights extinguished) led some scientists to believe, in the early days of EMP research, that the problem might not be as significant as was later realized. Newer calculations showed that if the *Starfish Prime* warhead had been detonated over the northern continental United States, the magnitude of the EMP would have been much larger (22 to 30 kilovolts/meter) because of the greater strength of the Earth's magnetic field over the United States, as well as the different orientation of the Earth's magnetic field at high latitudes. These new calculations, combined with the accelerating reliance on EMP-sensitive microelectronics, heightened awareness that the EMP threat could be a very significant problem.

Typical nuclear weapon yields used during Cold War planning for EMP attacks were in the range of 1 to 10 megatons (4.2 to 42 PJ). This is roughly 50 to 500 times the sizes of the weapons the United States used in Japan at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Physicists have testified at United States Congressional hearings, however, that weapons with yields of 10 kilotons (42 TJ) or less can produce a very large EMP.

If one compares explosions with different yields, the EMP at a fixed distance from a nuclear weapon would not increase at the same rate as the explosion yield, but at most only as the square root of the yield. This means that although a 10 kiloton weapon has only 0.7% of the total energy release of the 1.44-megaton *Starfish Prime* test, the EMP will be at least 8% as powerful. Since the E1 component of nuclear EMP depends on the prompt gamma ray output, which was only 0.1% of yield in *Starfish Prime* but can be 0.5% of yield in pure fission weapons of low yield, a 10 kiloton bomb can easily be $5 \times 8\% = 40\%$ as powerful as the 1.44 megaton *Starfish Prime* at producing EMP.

The total prompt gamma ray energy in a fission explosion is 3.5% of the yield, but in a 10 kiloton detonation the high explosive around the bomb core absorbs about 85% of the prompt gamma rays, so the output is only about 0.5% of the yield in kilotons. In the thermonuclear *Starfish Prime* the fission yield was less than 100% to begin with, and then the thicker outer casing absorbed about 95% of the prompt gamma rays from the pusher around the fusion stage. Thermonuclear weapons are also less efficient at producing EMP because the first stage can pre-ionize the air which becomes conductive and hence rapidly shorts out the electron Compton currents generated by the final, larger yield thermonuclear stage. Hence, small pure fission weapons with thin cases are far more efficient at causing EMP than most megaton bombs.

This analysis, however, only applies to the fast E1 and E2 components of nuclear EMP. The geomagnetic storm-like E3 component of nuclear EMP is more closely proportional to the total energy yield of the weapon.

The above comments about *Starfish Prime* and subsequent tests came from a file on my computer named: *Starfish_Prime* where I stored information copied from Wiki, when there was a Wiki. I had a second file I copied from Wiki stored by the page name: *List_of_nuclear_weapons*. It listed "all" of the nuclear weapons, by country. The third file

was named: Electromagnetic_pulse. Why did I store it? Well, I had 750GB HDD with and external 1000GB external backup drive. You never know when one of the files might come in handy, like now.

Question. How do you know where you're going unless you know where you came from? *Scientia est presencia!* Even in your mid to late 60s, you need a goal or two in life. It could be as simple as surviving until the next morning, but it's a goal.

As I mentioned earlier, Joanne and I were recovering our investments in the second dome, livestock, grain and timber. And as I also said, the recovery wasn't as fast as envisioned.

Our efforts to help our fellow residents in the area garnered unwanted attention. We were not God or his angels. We were not the King and Queen of northern Arkansas. Hell, we weren't even politicians. Bill and Hillary had tried all three and look where it got them...

With the direction and assistance of the Army, Air Force and Marines the US was affecting a recovery, be it so slow. There were still farmers growing every kind of crop imaginable, provided the military kept up the fuel deliveries and the rail system was able to make the deliveries to the regions needing the products. Every steam locomotive available was dusted off and repaired, replacing many of the diesel electric locomotives until sufficient supplies of biodiesel could be produced.

From there, the delivery system became more primitive relying on horses and oxen to deliver the loads to the distribution centers. The delivery centers turned right around and hauled the same goods to retail outlets using those same oxen and horses.

You may know this already, but oxen can haul heavier loads for longer periods of time while horses can haul lighter loads much faster; it is simply the nature of the animals. Probably the best all-around transportation animal was the Mule. They were faster than oxen and could carry the same load and walked faster than horses. On top of that, they were more surefooted than either oxen or horses. Can't say I ever heard the term 20 Oxen team or 20 Horse team; but most everyone has probably heard the term 20 Mule team.

Those 20 Mule teams hauled large loads of boron in the southern California area, especially near Trona and Boron. I almost suggested you check on Wiki; sorry, my bad. Trona is a small, nearly ghost town about 25 miles NE of Ridgecrest (China Lake) and Boron is an equally small community on the north side of Edwards Air Force Base.

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Point of information: A mule has a donkey sire and horse dam. A Hinny has a horse sire and donkey dam and is much rarer. The advantage of livestock over mechanical

equipment is that tractors and combines don't reproduce themselves and fuel is not a self-sustaining product.

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There's more to the story, but nothing of overwhelming significance. We experienced additional raids and successfully repelled each and every one. After enough failed attempts, the raiders gave up and went on to easier targets. One by one, the military tracked them down and eliminated them and eventually they found easier lines of work. In some ways the times mirror the Great Depression with different targets, farms as opposed to banks.

It's been a long time since the war and the PAW. We're both another ten years older and feeling every day of it. When the timber operation finished up Joanne and I bought another section of timber. Jack and Marion as well and Joanne and I retired and Jason ran the timber operation and Sean and Colin finally landed civilian jobs with the Army Corps of Engineers restoring hydroelectric dams.

The emphasis is now on hydroelectric power, wind power and Photovoltaic power. All of the nuclear reactors were shut down as their licenses expired with a few notable exceptions. Palo Verde is still running but scheduled to be the last nuclear plant to be shut-down. Both Diablo Canyon and San Onofre were closed when California had *The Big One*. That Yucca Mountain storage site for spent fuel rods was abandoned and a safer locality and a depository were built about 150 miles from any population center or known seismically location.

For the most part, the medical profession is about where they were when the War occurred. Marion, Jack, Joanne and I all have one type of cancer or another. The doctors sound hopeful, but we can see it in their eyes, it's just a matter of time. I'm tired and I think I'll wrap this up with a reflection on Thomas Jefferson.

He was right about a rebellion; we called it the Civil War. We haven't had another and given the current group of politicians, who only serve for 6 months per year, regardless, we finally managed to clean up politics. All federal gun laws were challenged by interested parties with one bone or another to pick and the Supreme Court slowly eliminated federal gun laws to a system that actually made sense.

Manufacturers had to maintain records of firearms produced, distributors had to maintain records of retailers to whom they sold the arms and dealers still had to fill out a simplified 4473. But, that was the extent of the federal firearms laws. Imports were once again allowed with similar record keeping requirements.

Sweet Dreams – Epilog

State governments who had stricter gun laws were forced to repeal most of them. You can easily guess which states were most affected by the new laws. About as close as one could come to restrictive guns laws were those that required guns being checked with local law enforcement during you visit to their city, à la Tombstone.

Some of the sayings espoused by the pro-gun crowd were proven to be truer than false. *An armed society is a polite society. When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns.* Concealed weapons permits were still required and available to anyone 18 or over. All were Shall Issue permits issued within five days of application and only required a NCIC check and no more local law enforcement permission and no more fingerprints. The permit fee was \$25 and the permits were good for 5 years.

Penalties for use of firearms during the commission of a felony added an automatic five additional years to the sentence and those five years were served in full at the beginning to the prison term. Violent crimes fell to an all-time low. Sarah Brady and her ilk had it all wrong; the criminal was the person not the weapon. Criminals could regain their civil liberties after a demonstration that they were reformed, generally a period of good conduct equal to their time served.

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David died the night he wrote that. Jack was dead four months later and Marion and my cancers are in remission. It's nice to be able to go to Wal-Mart in Flippin and buy the same products that were available before the war. I gave Sean David's collection of firearms and most of mine to Colin. I'm hanging onto my Browning, PPK, Super Match and 590A1 until I'm gone with the understanding that the firearms will go to Colin.

David and I really were married in every sense of the word when I returned to Mountain Home to teach. In that sense we were actually married from 1977 on. For the most part it was seldom discussed. I'm not sure what David told Jack, but I didn't confirm it to Marion until after David and Jack were gone. And, I never bothered to try and explain it to Sean and Colin.

It was an adventure beyond my wildest imagination. Thanks for taking the time to share our adventure.

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